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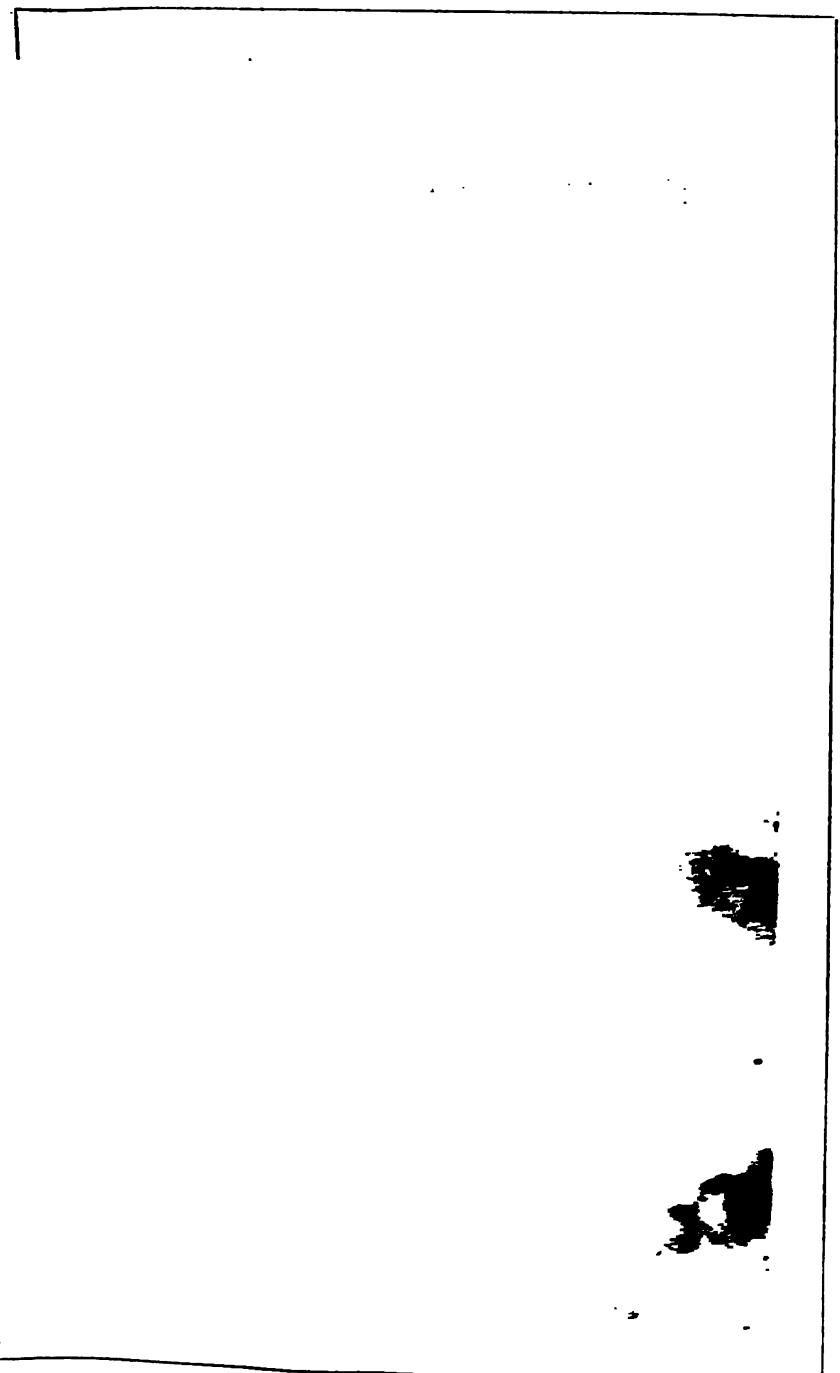
G. Murray

— I can pretend to nothing, as  
a critic - dear Miss Reed, but as one who  
listened to your Play with deep interest  
I can assure you, that I think very  
highly of your production - and wish  
it all success —

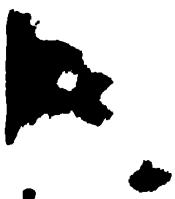
Yours friend —

D P Madison.

Washington }  
March 19<sup>th</sup> 1842 }



MVR



# D R A M A T I C P O E M S

BY

HARRIETTE FANNING READ.

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BOSTON:

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MVR

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TO

MRS. JAMES K. PAIGE,

AND

THE MANY OTHER FRIENDS TO WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT I AM  
INDEBTED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL COMMENCEMENT OF

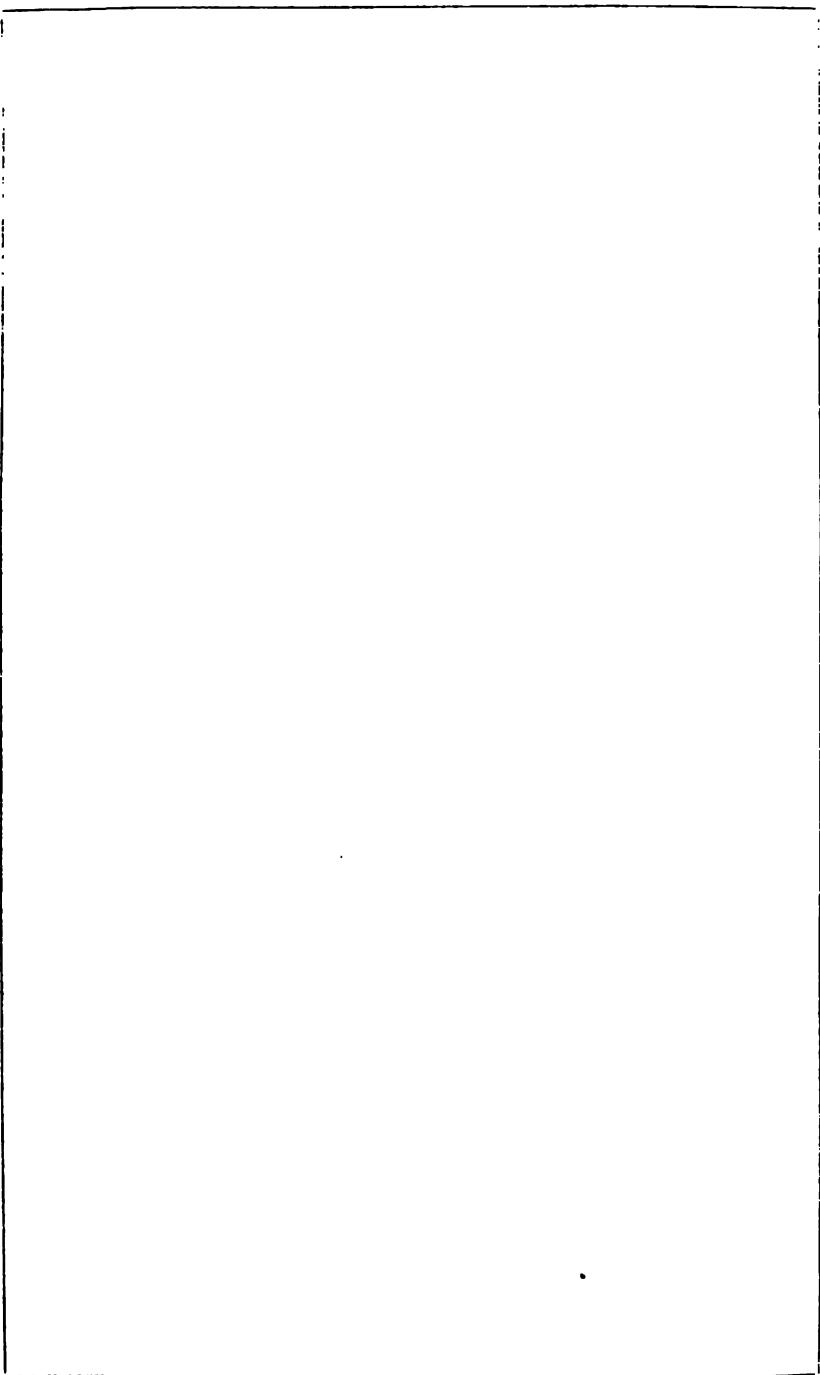
MY ENTERPRISE, I VENTURE TO

DEDICATE THIS

VOLUME

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR

AID AND SYMPATHY.



## INTRODUCTION.

---

IT is customary for persons, on first presenting themselves for enrolment in the motley ranks of authorship, to offer to those dreaded inspectors, the critics, some reason for appearing before them, some excuse for deficiencies, which may propitiate or soften those guardians of the public taste. In adopting this usage, I will endeavour to be concise. It has been said that the world is indebted for great works to “the pressure of want without, and genius within”; but to the first clause of the above-cited inspiration, and to a love of publicity, I believe it is conceded that we owe a large portion of the literature of the nineteenth century; by sufferance and custom, the former has come to be received as a valid plea for admission into the army of self-tormentors, ycleped authors. I can present no other.

I will not commit the mistake of offering many statements in palliation of the crudeness of these performances; — it is to personal friends alone that we

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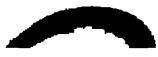
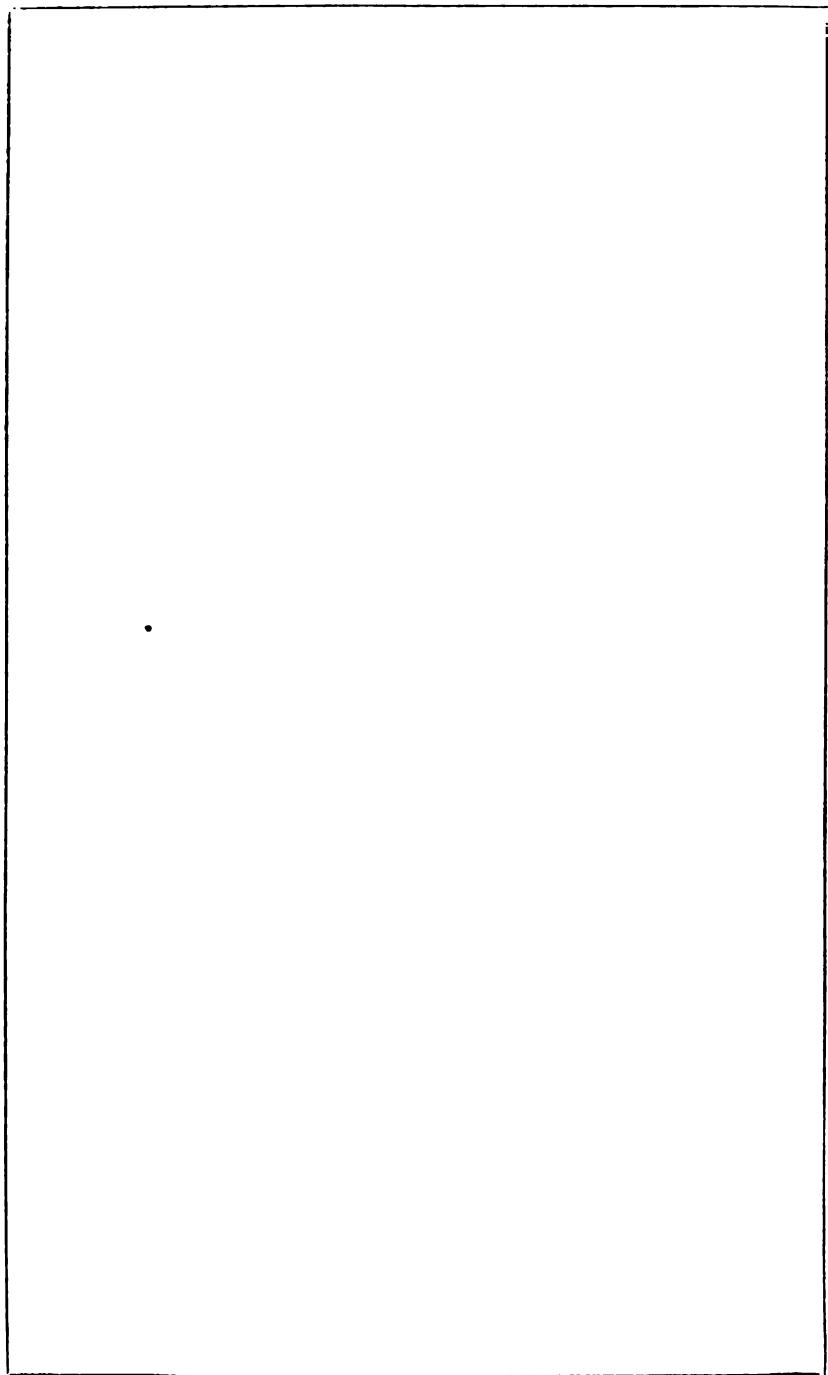
can look for sympathy or patience with such details ;— one only shield will I venture to place between their defects and deserved censure, which is, that these plays were written between the age of twenty and twenty-three, a period at which much literary power or finish is not expected even of the stronger sex, with their superior opportunities of thought and study. With this excuse (which, if not well grounded, must vanish before the first glance of fair investigation) I will intrude no longer on the attention of the courteous reader, than to express here, as in my Dedication, my heartfelt sense of the exceeding kindness and encouragement which have enabled me to persevere in an undertaking that would have been otherwise so hazardous and painful.

H. F. R.

## C O N T E N T S.

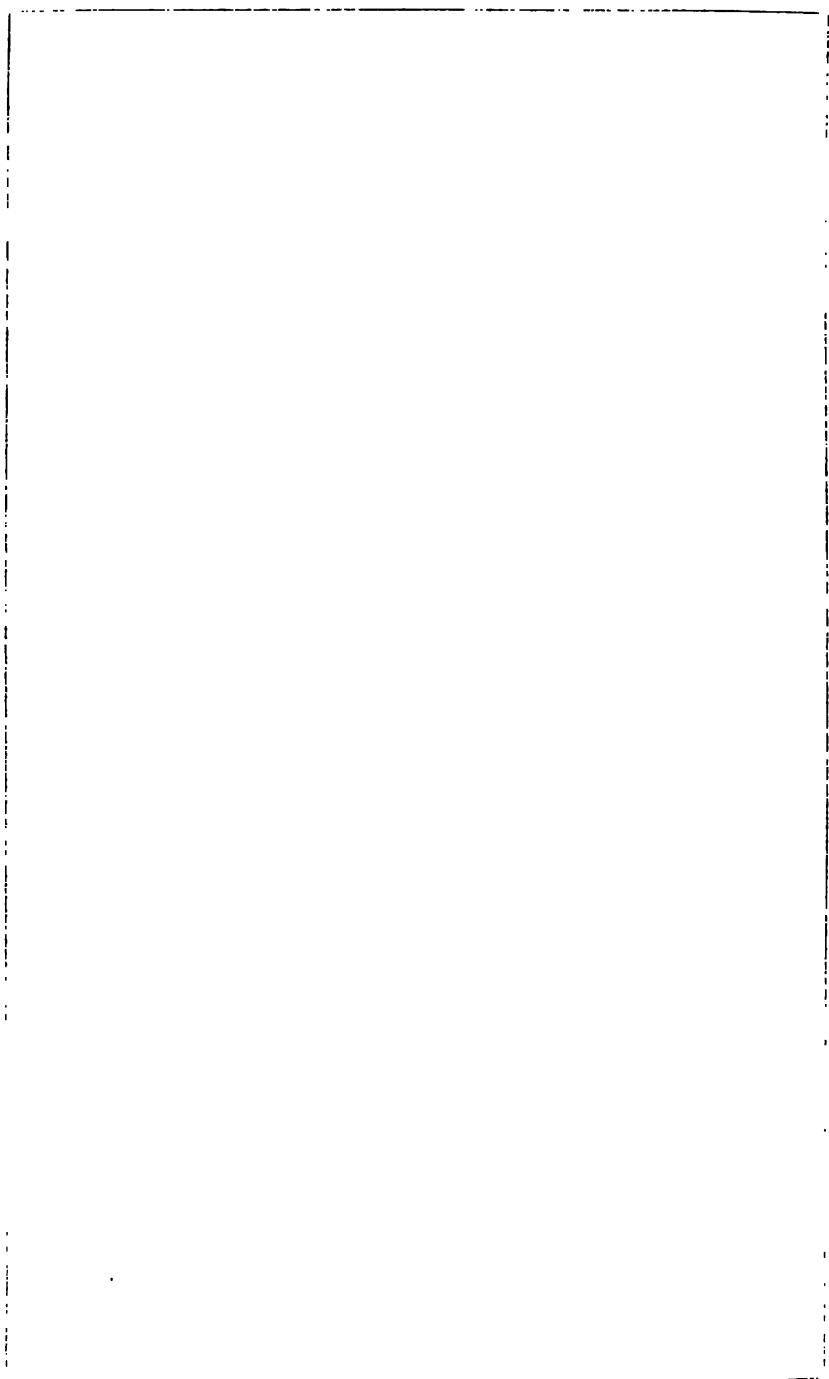
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	PAGE
MEDEA, . . . . .	1
ERMINIA; A TALE OF FLORENCE, . . . . .	99
THE NEW WORLD, . . . . .	197



**M E D E A .**

*b*



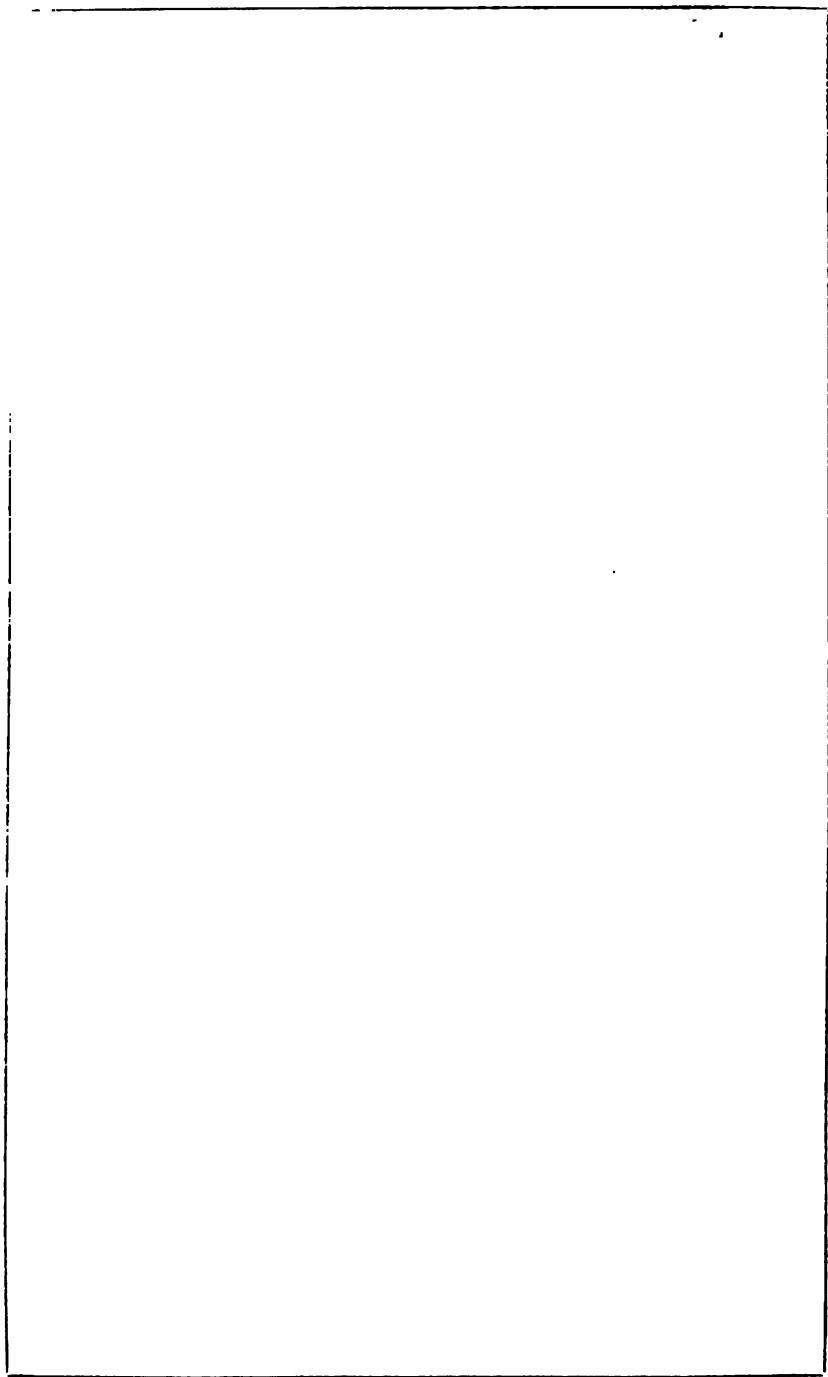
## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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AETES,	King of Colchis.
ABSYRTUS,	His Son.
JASON,	A Greek Prince.
ICARUS,	His Friend.
CREON,	King of Corinth.
LYCUS,	A Slave.
MEDEA,	Daughter of Aetes.
CREUSA,	Daughter of Creon.
IANTHE,	Attendant on Medea.
DIRCETIS,	Attendant on Creusa.

*Followers of Aetes, Creon, and Jason.*

*The SCENE during the first two acts is in Colchis ; for the remainder  
of the play, in Corinth.*



## M E D E A.

---

### ACT I.

SCENE I. *An apartment in the palace of ÆTES. Enter ABSYRTUS and IANTHE, meeting.*

IANTHE.

STAY, gentle prince, thy steps ; thy sister sleeps.

ABSYRTUS.

The king requires her presence.

IANTHE.

Even for him

I may not chase her slumbers, for to-day  
A most unwonted gloom oppresses her,  
And e'en to me, of her attendant train  
Most favored, her accustomed sweetness fails.

ABSYRTUS.

Bid her come forth, and view the glorious scene  
Which late I left. 'T would make a bondman's heart  
Beat free from gloom. When shall I be a man ?

IANTHE.

What is 't inspires thy boyish fancy thus ?

ABSYRTUS.

Seest thou, Ianthe, by the river's side  
Yon gallant ship ? Full fifty warriors thence —

The pride of Greece — have landed on our shores.  
Radiant in armour, with heroic mien  
They met the herald whom my father sent  
To learn their purpose here. O fair Ianthe,  
Hadst thou but seen their chief, Thessalian Jason !  
Hadst seen his towering form, his flashing eye,  
Whilst, lightly leaning on his spear, he gazed  
On all around, as he were king in Colchis !

IANTHE.

What seeks he here ?

ABSYRTUS.

He claims the golden fleece, —

The hallowed offering on the shrine of Mars, —  
And thinks with fifty followers to enforce  
This bold demand against the king, my father.  
And yet, Ianthe, he is but a youth, —  
Has scarce seen twenty summers. Fare thee well !  
When I 'm a man, and bear the weight of armour,  
I 'll not be less a hero than this Jason,  
For I shall be a king, you know, Ianthe. [Exit.]

IANTHE.

Greeks ! How my heart beats at the sound ! I too  
Was born in Thessaly's loved vales, nor can  
Forget what freedom was, though gratitude  
To my sweet mistress, gentlest of her sex,  
Forbids the captive's sigh. Could I but see  
My countrymen ! Medea sleeps ; — I 'll dare  
Desert my post, — just for a moment's glance. [Exit.]

## SCENE II.

*MEDEA discovered sleeping. She starts from her couch.*

**MEDEA.**

STAY thine unhallowed hand ! He shall not die !  
Where am I ? What entralls my senses thus ?  
Ah, was 't a vision then, yon glorious form ?  
Return, return, bright phantom ! — Thou art fled,  
And with thee my deluded heart has sunk  
To night and chaos. Let me ever dream !  
To be deluded thus is of more worth  
Than all earth's tame realities. It moves  
Before me now in all the light of truth !  
Here stood the king, — his brow inflamed with rage ;  
His murderous falchion raised against a form,  
Ye gods ! so like yourselves in majesty,  
And sunlike beauty, that my untamed heart  
Owned a supremacy ne'er felt before,  
Now felt but to be mourned. It cannot be  
A thing of falsehood. Falsehood could not show  
In forms so vivid. O'er it still would hang  
Some murky vapor to betray its birth.  
Cease, my bewildered heart, these fond essays  
'Gainst reason's voice ! Enamoured of a dream !  
Tears of despair and shame o'erflow mine eyes.  
Yet why despair ? for some benignant power  
May, in its prescient wisdom, thus have sent

These shadowy ministers from Lethe's banks  
 As heralds of the future. — It is so ! —  
 The air is redolent of perfume, and  
 A strange, mysterious awe o'erpowers my soul !  
 Some God inspires my hopes ! Bright Queen of Heaven,  
 Assure my troubled heart ! Grant me some sign  
 That madness has not seized my wavering soul !

*(A peal of thunder is heard.)*

Auspicious omen ! Mighty Juno, thanks !

*(Enter IANTHE.)*

IANTHE.

Princess, —

MEDEA.

Who calls me thus from heaven to earth ?

IANTHE.

The king —

MEDEA.

What of the king, barbarian ? Speak !

IANTHE.

Commands thy presence at the council-seat.

MEDEA.

Why should I tremble thus ? It is his wont  
 To call me to his side ; why should I fear  
 Lest mortal eye should scan this fluttering heart,  
 And read the page traced by the hand of Heaven ?

*[Aside. Exit.]*

IANTHE.

Some heavy care, or grief, or fear, disturbs

Her gentle breast. This agitation 's strange,  
And comes across her tender, graceful mien,  
Like storm-clouds whirling o'er the crescent moon.

(Enter Lycus.)

LYCUS.

How 's this, Ianthe ? Musing ? Leave dull thoughts  
To those who, free of hand, are slaves in mind,  
Fettered by Care, who hath enfranchised us.

IANTHE.

Of such I mused. Saw you the princess ?

LYCUS.

No.

My errand was to bid her haste her steps  
To the king's presence.

IANTHE.

She is gone ; but with  
Such strange disorder in her looks and words  
As made me wonder.

LYCUS.

Call'st thou that a cause  
Of wonder ? Ah, Ianthe ! 't is more strange  
That reason ever guides the looks or speech  
Of one who lives defying all her laws.

IANTHE.

What mean'st thou, Lycus ?

LYCUS.

No enigma, dear.

Nature nor reason formed your gentle sex

To deal in magic arts, — save those of Love, —  
To brave the gods, by rending the dark veil  
They place between us and their mysteries, —  
To waste the nights, which Nature gave for rest,  
In vigils passed in dark companionship  
With fiends and ghosts, forced from their dire abode  
In Pluto's realm, — to fright the very stars  
From their accustomed spheres, by horrid rites  
At Hecate's shrine, — what gain ye by such power ?  
Raised above mortals, still beneath the gods ; —  
The first both fear and shun the sorceress ;  
The latter mock her meagre emulation  
Of godlike power and wisdom. She gains not  
The pride of heaven, — loses the bliss of earth.  
My life upon 't, Medea never loved.

IANTHE.

She loves me well.

LYCUS.

The good gods bless her for 't !  
But think'st thou she hath ever loved — as we love ?

IANTHE.

No ; for a heart like hers could only yield  
To one of as rich worth.

LYCUS.

Then she can love ?

IANTHE.

Ay ; her young heart 's a mine of pure affection,  
From which no common hand hath ever gained

A single gem ; he who wins aught wins all ;  
But he must show his title to the prize  
In spotless truth, heroic deeds, and love  
Ardent, unwavering, as the sun's bright rays.  
Apollo's self might covet such a bride.

LYCUS.

Thy praises, flowing from a grateful heart,  
Grace thee as much as her. But hark thee, love,  
What says she to my suit for thee ? 'T is long  
Since Love hath bound our hearts ; is it not time  
To offer sacrifice at Hymen's shrine ?

IANTHE.

What should she say, whose wishes ever tend  
To others' happiness ? She bade me bear  
Her full consent to thee, and earnest prayer  
That all the gods may smile upon us. Come,  
I 'll show thee gifts her kindness hath bestowed.

LYCUS.

May she be happy as she now makes us !

[*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.

*A public place near the palace ; in the centre a throne. Enter AETES, attended by nobles and guards.*

AETES.

WHY stay these strangers ? Are they warned the king  
Waits their approach ?

## M E D E A .

**NOBLE.**

Dread sovereign, they appear.

**ÆTES.**

The princess, too. We ordered her attendance.

Why lingers she ?

(Enter MEDEA.)

**MEDEA.**

My father and my king !

(Enter, opposite, JASON and the ARGONAUTS. MEDEA sinks at  
the king's feet, as she perceives JASON.)

My dream ! my dream ! Protect me, wife of Jove !

**ÆTES.**

What folly 's this ? Tremblest thou at a word ?

Arise ; remember now thou art a princess.

**MEDEA.**

Alas, 't is now I know myself a slave !

[Aside.]

**ÆTES.**

Strangers, let him who calls himself your chief  
Stand forth, and say by what design or chance  
You press the shores of Colchis.

**JASON.**

I am he,

Whom my brave comrades, the good gods consenting,  
Have placed as leader of our enterprise ;  
Jason, the heir to fair Iolcos' throne,  
Whence, in mine infancy, Pelias cast  
My sire, its monarch. Most unwillingly  
I offer, sovereign Ætes, to your ear

This dull recital of a stranger's wrongs ;  
But dire Necessity thus orders it,  
To whom even Jove submits.

AETES.

Proceed to say  
What dire necessity conducts thee here.

JASON.

Soon as to manhood's strength ambition's hopes  
Dared look for confirmation, I approached  
The tyrant, who, enthroned amid my subjects,  
Suspected not a rival, and in words  
Where prudence wrestled with my lawful passion,  
I claimed my birthright. The usurper shook  
With guilty fears. Although around the throne  
His armed warriors closed, and I, a youth,  
With no defence save the invisible arms  
Of the just gods, stood there within his power,  
He dared not, even by sign, command my death,  
But with evasive speech strove to content me.  
These were his words, for which I crave your patience : —  
“ Late to my slumbers came the frowning shade  
Of Phryxus, my unhappy kinsman, who  
Bade me remember that the golden fleece,  
Celestial gift, remained to bless a land  
Remote from Thessaly. The vision's will  
Must not be disobeyed : but I am old, —  
By nature's laws unfit for enterprise ;  
Therefore go thou ; to Colchis speed thy way ;

Regain the golden fleece, and here I swear  
By Jupiter, our common ancestor,  
No act of mine shall bar thee from thy right,  
But my own hand place on thy head the crown.”  
He ceased : I joyfully accept his bidding.  
Through tedious ways, and weary toils, at length  
Behold the destined land, and from its king  
Request the precious relic, which the gods  
Ordained the spur and recompense of valor.

*ÆTES.*

Insolent pirate ! Lightnings blast thy tongue,  
And thunders drown thy evil-boding voice !  
Though thou couldst beard a Greek upon his throne  
And live, so shalt thou never do in Colchis !  
Down to the infernal gods, whose lying dreams  
Have sent thee here, as fitting sacrifice  
To Phryxus’ angry manes !

*MEDEA.*

On thy life,  
Forbear ! The gods with awful wrath pursue  
The wretch whose sacrilegious hand is raised  
Against a guest. Dare *Ætes* war with Jove ?

*ÆTES.*

Away ! his rashness doth insult the powers  
Whose rights you vainly urge. The prize he seeks,  
Bestowed on Phryxus by Apollo’s grace,  
Descends from him to me ; — a talisman  
Which brings such priceless blessings to my country,

That he who asks that, next may ask my crown.

JASON.

'T is with Apollo's self you war, O king !  
The Delphian oracle declares the fleece  
Destined to crown my toils ; no right hast thou  
To the celestial gift, from Phryxus won  
By guilt inhospitable.

AETES.

Seize him, guards !  
Him and his robber crew ! — What do ye dread ?

MEDEA.

Medea's glance ! What Colchian dare assail  
Where she defends ? By all the gods, who stirs  
To thwart my will shall meet with pangs more dire  
Than ever racked Prometheus' rock-bound frame !

AETES.

How 's this ? The earth-contemning ministrant  
At Hecate's shrine thus mindful of a mortal !  
Weigh'st thou a stranger 'gainst thy native land ?  
Weigh'st thou a stranger 'gainst thy father's honor ?

MEDEA.

Country nor friends I weigh against the gods.  
Say, when the supreme majesty of heaven  
Deigns interfere to save a mortal's life,  
Shall I refuse its task ? A vision, sent  
By sovereign Juno, shaped my present course,  
To save thy hand from blood which she protects.

---

ÆTES.

I yield, Medea. To such power as thine  
Even kings are subject. I may thank the gods,  
Who made thee gentle, when they made thee strong.  
Jason, the princess' mercy claims thy knee.  
But for her boldness, thou and all thy train  
Ere this had fallen beneath my lawful wrath.

JASON.

To her, as to the guardian queen of heaven,  
With grateful heart I thus present my homage.

MEDEA.

Warrior, pay reverence to the king of Colchis,  
Not to his child and subject.

ÆTES.

Jason, hear !

This grace the king accords thee : thou art free,  
Since Heaven regards thy life, to leave my court ;  
But if thy desperate valor prompt thee still  
Towards thine unattainable desire,  
Learn through what toils and dangers you must seek  
The temple of great Mars, upon whose shrine  
Reposes the rich prize. First must be yoked  
Two bulls, dreadful with horns and feet of brass,  
Breathing forth poisonous flames ; with these thy hand  
Must plough a space of earth ; a dragon's teeth  
Then in the furrows sow ; they spring forth men !  
With spear and shield they hotly seek the fight.

These slain, next quell the huge and watchful dragon,  
Whose hideous length lies coiled before the altar.  
But, ere with sacrilegious hand you seize  
The glittering spoil, forget not first with prayer  
To deprecate the vengeance of the god.

JASON.

I will implore his aid, nor doubt the boon.  
A warrior is the votary of Mars,  
Whose shield is ever spread to guard his life,  
Whose smile beams through the darkest clouds of war,  
At once the beacon and the lure to glory.

ÆTES.

Go, then ; prepare thy arms, and look thy last  
Upon the orb of day ; for he and thou  
Will sink in night together.

JASON.

I accept  
The omen, king ; he sinks, to rise again  
In splendor, warmth, and strength renewed. Hope not  
To see me yield, but as he yields, to rise,  
Exulting in new vigor. By the gods !  
The conqueror's pride swells now within my breast.

[Exit, with his train.

ÆTES.

Go, boastful youth, short-lived thy conquering pride !  
Nor men nor gods shall force me to behold  
A boyish Greek insult my rank and power,  
Challenge my claims, and bear my spoils away !

(*To Medea.*)

Since mortal hand must not attack this foe,  
See that the aids of magic fail me not.

[*Exit, with followers.*

MEDEA.

Teach me, O Love, to save, or perish with him !

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

*Before the temple of Hecate. Enter Jason and Icarus.*

JASON.

No more, Icarus ; on this enterprise  
I perilled all, and all is lost. To hope  
Were weakness. For myself I have no fear,  
But my brave friends thus ruined by my madness !  
Would I had fifty lives, that, one by one,  
I might resign them as my comrades' ransom !

ICARUS.

Hope dwells with life, nor will she be repelled  
By wisdom or despair. To-day thy life  
Seemed forfeit, but kind Heaven sent aid, — such aid  
As well might make grim Death forego his purpose,  
And give life double sweetness.

JASON.

It is that  
Gives death its horrors. Love, Icarus, love  
Attacked me from her eye, as now it gleamed

Defiance on my foes, now fell on me  
With soul-subduing sweetness, while a tint,  
Soft as the morn's first blush, suffused her cheek  
Beneath my grateful gaze. Ye gods ! to die,  
When Love's elysium first bursts on the soul !  
Better a thousand deaths in the heart's torpor,  
Than one at such awakening !

## ICARUS.

E'en that one  
Thou shalt not suffer. She who saved thee then  
Can save thee now, and all with thee. Seek her ;  
With equal fervor breathe thy love to her,  
As now to me, nor fear for the result.  
Go, match fair Venus' mischief-making boy  
At his own weapons. Would thine were my lot !

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE V.

*The temple of HECATE. Enter MEDEA.*

## MEDEA.

HAIL to this hallowed dome ! Here can I breathe  
In freedom ; here, in secret, meditate  
On saving him I love ; — I love ! — my lips  
Tremble in uttering such unwonted sounds.  
I love ! — Love whom ? — A stranger, who insults  
My father's power and seeks my country's wealth ?  
A wandering exile ? Princess, let thy heart

Beat with far other, higher aspirations ! —  
Love ! What know I of love ? Vain dream, away !  
'T is but my fancy's momentary freak,  
For oft she aims at us Love's headless darts,  
Which startle us, but wound not. 'T is not love !  
My reason soars again ! — But must he die ?  
Shall savage bulls, in most unequal strife,  
With brazen horns tear out his warrior heart,  
And crush that brow where dignity and grace  
Are stamped as on the young Apollo's front ?  
Must I behold the eyes, so full of hope,  
Rolling in the fierce agonies of death ?  
Ah, men and gods forbid the unholy strife !  
Forbid it, Love ! I writhe beneath thy darts,  
And nature rends away the filmy veil  
With which I vainly sought to blind her eyes.

(Enter JASON.)

What wouldst thou here ?

JASON.

To thank thee for my life.

MEDEA.

A princess takes not e'en the hire of thanks  
For princely deeds ; rather address the gods  
To guard thee 'gainst the coming dangers.

JASON.

Ah !

Who looks from present bliss to future ill ?

## MEDEA.

The truly great ! Else are they but the tools  
Of time and chance. Aim'st thou to be of those,  
Look to the future. Pray Minerva's aid,  
Ere you seek that of Mars ; nor think that I  
Can give thee wisdom, as I gave thee life.

## JASON.

I do implore both deities, and draw  
Their inspiration from thine eyes. They are  
But two. Dared I but hope thou wouldest admit  
Bright Venus to the council, that her smile  
Might lend its softness to Minerva's lip,  
And gild the rugged front of Mars, then, then,  
With earnest prayer I 'd hail the heavenly three,  
And raise an altar to propitious Fortune.

## MEDEA.

What hath the gentle mother of the Loves  
To do where Death hath warrant to intrude ?

## JASON.

To soften the grim tyrant with her tears,  
And charm him by her smiles ; to turn aside,  
With heavy sighings of her fragrant breath,  
His cruel dart ; then raise to life and hope  
The rescued suppliant.

## MEDEA.

I must hear no more !

## JASON.

Stay, princess, I implore thee ! To what end

Didst thou avert thy father's falchion, since  
A deadlier peril doth encompass me ?  
Let me not dare to think you saved my life  
To offer me, in ruthless sacrifice,  
To foes beyond the prowess of a mortal !

MEDEA.

Ye heavens, bear witness that it was not so !

JASON.

Didst thou bend on me thy resistless glance,  
Teaching my heart the most entralling charm  
That earth can boast, — bestowing thus on life  
A new attraction, — but to give Death a horror,  
Which his own grim aspect could ne'er impart ?

MEDEA.

Why dost thou torture me with these wild words ?

JASON.

Great Mars attest, that but a short hour since  
I would have spurned the prophet to my feet,  
Who had foretold that Jason would have shrunk  
From danger, or from death ; now is my heart  
Humbled by Venus' power, and I will sue  
To thee for life, — if with that life thou 'lt give  
Thy love —

MEDEA.

Rash stranger, this is madness ! — Yet  
I am most mad, who listen, but should fly !

JASON.

Thou canst not fly, for Pity bars the way.

O, let her plead for me, and Love for both !

MEDEA.

And if they should, Nature would plead against them.  
My father, country, friends, her hand presents, —  
An awful shield 'gainst the darts of Love !

JASON.

'T is true ; and I depart to die ; for see !  
Thy fierce barbarians hurry to the spot  
From which my dying groans must glut their ears ;  
And with slow pace my brother-warriors go  
To meet their doom in mine. Distracting thought !  
Ah, mighty princess, hear my prayer for them,  
My much-loved friends ! Save them, — thou only canst, —  
For they have wives, and fair affianced brides,  
In their own land of Greece !

MEDEA.

And for thyself ?

JASON.

I have nor wife, nor bride. I would not take  
Life as a boon, though kings stooped to implore me,  
Unless Medea's love enriched the gift.  
Though life with her were an Elysium,  
Without her smile it seems so dark and drear,  
I cast it off, as captives do their chains,  
And look for joy in death.

MEDEA.

Then, Jason, live !

Medea bids thee live for her — and Love.

## JASON.

Does Fate relent ? I thank the bounteous gods,  
Who, while I blamed their rigor, had in store  
A blessing worthy an immortal's envy.  
Bright star of hope, O, speak ! confirm again  
My raptures ! Hark ! upon yon plain of death  
They clamor for the victim. I must hence.

## MEDEA.

Go, Jason, fearless, to the monstrous combat ;  
It hath no dangers to Medea's lord.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Enter LYCUS and IANTHE, meeting.*

IANTHE.

THY looks bespeak great news ; what of the fight ?

LYCUS.

Joy, joy, Ianthe, chokes my utterance.

Jason hath burst the snares of magic power,

And stands triumphant 'mid the wondering crowd.

IANTHE.

O, stop not there ! Say, how was this achieved ?

LYCUS.

The gods have aided, for no earthly skill

Could thus have quelled unearthly enemies.

Low bowed the savage bulls their mighty necks,

And from the warrior's hand the slavish yoke

Received with fear, and then, with sullen steps,

But unresisting, dragged the servile plough

Across the appointed space ; with hasty hand

Jason dispersed upon the furrowed soil

The dragon's teeth ; forth sprung the wondrous birth

Of warriors, panting for the fight ; they joined

In strife unequal ; every side they press

The hapless Greek with blows ; still he maintains

Such conflict as a single arm can hold.  
His falchion snaps in twain ; he sinks, he dies !  
No, he but bends to snatch from favoring earth  
Another weapon, in a ponderous stone.  
With well-directed aim, and vigorous arm,  
He hurls it 'midst his thronging enemies ;  
When, wondrous to behold ! the war is changed !  
Each dragon-sprung combatant turns his force  
Against his brother ; bloody strife they wage,  
Until not one is left ; and Jason stands  
The conqueror, where he thought to find his doom !

IANTHE.

How bore the king this unexpected end ?

LYCUS.

Shame and revenge sat darkling on his brow ;  
Then, starting from his seat, he waved his hand,  
And, followed by his court, rushed from the scene.  
Freed from the terrors of his glance, the crowd,  
Both Greeks and Colchians, raise the loud acclaim.  
Let me too shout, Jason and liberty !

IANTHE.

Mock not our fates with that forbidden word.

LYCUS.

By all the gods, it shall not long be so !

(Enter MEDEA in the background.)

What wouldest thou risk for Greece and liberty ?

IANTHE.

My life ! my life ! and only ask to breathe

Its latest sigh upon my native shores.

LYCUS.

It shall be so. Hold thou a constant mind,  
And we 'll elope with these our countrymen.  
'T will not be hard, so trusted as we are,  
To effect this purpose. Look'st thou doubtingly ?  
Canst thou refuse ?

IANTHE.

No, but there 's one, of whom  
I dare not ask approval of my flight.

LYCUS.

Medea ?

IANTHE.

Gratitude.

MEDEA (*coming forward*).

Both bid thee fly !

Blush not, nor kneel for pardon, but receive  
My full and free consent. Lycus, go thou ;  
Swiftly and secretly prepare to leave  
Colchis and slavery this night. Stay not  
For further question. Thou art free. Begone !

[*Exit Lycus.*

My gentle girl, why look'st thou fearfully ?  
Think'st thou my reason hath deserted me ?  
But, though it still abide within my brain,  
It hath no power upon the jarring thoughts  
That rage in unrestrained rebellion there.  
Ianthe, thou art but in name a slave ;

For in my heart I placed thee as a friend.  
Hast thou not felt it so ?

IANTHE.

I have, my princess.  
O, teach me to repay the debt !

MEDEA.

Then be  
More than a friend ; O, be my elder sister !  
For much I need a sister's aid and counsel.

IANTHE.

The first I render as a sacred due ;  
But for the last, who to Medea can  
So well give counsel as Medea's self.

MEDEA.

Not when my reason and my heart each strive  
To gain the mastery. Yet to thy breast  
I 'll dare intrust my thoughts ; I 'll dare to speak,  
If thou hast strength to hear.

IANTHE.

Thy looks are strange !  
If that which thou wouldest say refers to me,  
Delay it not.

MEDEA.

Ianthe, thou hast seen  
Lycus, thy chosen lord, depart in freedom :  
Did it not glad thy heart ?

IANTHE.

Princess, it gave  
New life to it.

MEDEA.

Didst thou not hope to share  
This freedom with him ?

IANTHE.

How ! What means Medea ?

MEDEA.

If Fate decree that he alone shall view  
His native Greece, and thou still linger here —

IANTHE.

Fate first must slay me ! Princess, on my knee  
I pray revoke the cruel supposition !  
Thou art our Fate, thou only canst decree this.

MEDEA.

Could nothing tempt thee to remain in Colchis, —  
Medea's friendship, wealth and rank, a lord  
From the most noble of our Colchian warriors ?

IANTHE.

Were the world offered me I should despise it.

MEDEA.

Suppose thou wert in Greece, in thine own land, —  
Dearer, because thine own, than fair Elysium, —  
With all the ties of parents, sisters, brothers,  
Kindred, and country strong within thy breast ;  
Wouldst thou, for Lycus, rend those quivering bonds,  
And trust thy bleeding heart with confidence  
To him, — a stranger, from a distant land, —  
And find thy home, thy kindred, — ay, thy life, —  
In him ?

---

IANTHE.

Attest it, Truth !

MEDEA.

The oracle

Of nature doth address me through her lips !  
Fear not, Ianthe, that I would destroy  
The frailest tenure of thy happiness.  
Draw nearer, lest the echo of my words  
Should steal unto my tyrant father's ear.  
As thou hast said, even so will I perform.  
Hark thee ! 'T was I who tamed yon furious beasts !  
'T was I who pointed out the magic stone,  
Which turned upon each other the fell power  
Of Jason's hellish foes ! Still there remains  
Another task, — the watchful dragon's eye  
To be eluded ; with Lethean dew  
In magic slumber will I seal his senses ;  
Seize then the golden fleece, and swiftly mount  
The gallant Argo, blest in Jason's love,  
And looking on the future through his eyes !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*Before the temple of MARS. Enter JASON.*

JASON.

HERE did my sweet enchantress bid me wait  
The last hard task her tyrant sire ordained ; —

A task not hard to me, who, safely borne  
On Cupid's pinions, o'er such perils skim.  
What need he fear, whose path, however dark,  
The gentle smile of Love's bright queen illumines,  
While Mars, for her sake, with his warlike arm  
Dashes aside the dangers of the way ?

(Enter MEDEA from the temple.)

MEDEA.

The foe hath sunk 'neath sleep's restless wand.  
Go fearlessly, and seize the prize : I cannot, —

[Exit JASON.]

I cannot gather strength thus to despoil  
My father of the thing he holds so dear,  
Although 't was won by blood, the innocent blood  
Of Jason's murdered kinsman ! — Deities  
Of heaven and hell, aid and protect me now !  
At this drear hour of earthly stillness, ye  
From Ida's groves, with ever-beaming eyes  
That pay no tribute to Lethean waves,  
Behold your votaress ! No visible form  
Is near, but the cold, stern, unwavering glance  
Of Destiny is fixed upon my soul,  
Bidding me scan again its hopes, and fears,  
And secret motives, in whose knowledge she  
Must hold communion with me. 'T is the hand  
Of Destiny impels, yet her stern voice  
Sinks in my heart, and echoes through its cells, —  
“ Reflect, Medea ! When you place yourself

On yonder wave, and view the Argo's sail  
 Spread to the breeze, you spread life's shivering sails  
 Before my breath, which, with a power beyond  
 E'en Hope, must bear thee onward to the end !  
 Before my piercing glance the phantom Change  
 Sinks to oblivion ; with Destiny  
 There is no change ! " — Yes, these the awful words

*(Re-enter JASON.)*

That thrill my frame, and make my purpose sick,  
 But cannot shake it !

JASON.

Bless thee for those words !  
 And thou shalt bless them through a happy life !  
 But see, our friends approach ; we must be gone !

MEDEA.

A moment ! O my country, must I leave thee, —  
 Leave thee for ever ? Ah, I never knew  
 Till now how strong the love I bore to thee !  
 For the last time my swelling heart breathes forth  
 Its sighs of anguish on my country's airs !  
 My native earth, receive thy daughter's knee !  
 For the last time her falling tears bedew  
 Thy much-loved breast.

*JASON (urging her away).*

Medea !

MEDEA.

Ah, my country !  
*(Enter ABSYRTUS.)*

ABSYRTUS.

You pass not here !

MEDEA.

My brother ! We 're betrayed !

JASON.

Vain boy, give way, nor place thy stripling form  
In opposition to a warrior's might !

MEDEA.

My brother, Jason !

ABSYRTUS.

Stripling as I am,  
The bow I bear can send its messenger  
Through manhood's heart ! One step, — it enters thine !

JASON.

Dost threaten me ?

MEDEA.

Stay, Jason, I implore !

Absyrtus, why art thou mine enemy ?

ABSYRTUS.

Am I my sister's enemy because  
I am my father's friend ?

MEDEA.

Though thy rebuke  
Hath show of justice, reason sees 't is void ;  
And yet it brings renewal of a pang  
Thou mightst have spared me, for too well thou know'st  
My father never loved me.

**ABSYRTUS.**

Now so great  
His love for thee, he comes to stay thy flight !

**JASON.**

Delay is death !

**MEDEA.**

Hold ! Brother, by our love,  
Stand back ! Jason for my sake spares thy life,  
At peril of his own. Yield, I beseech thee.

**JASON.**

Withhold me not, Medea ! Nay, fear not  
For him or me ; I would not harm the boy  
For Colchis' crown, and for his childish threats,  
Rate them as breath.

**MEDEA.**

They come ! Brother, be wise !  
Yield thou the path, lest desperation prompt  
A deed whose blackness shall make Night recoil,  
And wrap the land in deeper gloom than hers !

**ABSYRTUS.**

I tell thee, no ! he shall not pass alive !

**JASON.**

What, boy, thou 'lt prove a warrior ; but thy conquests  
Must not begin with me !

(Wrests the bow from him.)

Ha ! torches moving !  
Stay ! borne by friends or foes ?

ABSYRTUS (*attempting to stab him from behind*).

This from thy foe !

MEDEA (*interposing, plunges a knife into ABSYRTUS's breast ; he falls*).

Remorseless Furies ! What a deed is this !

(*Sinks into JASON's arms. Enter LYCUS and IANTHE on one side ; on the other the ARGONAUTS.*)

## ACT III.

*Corinth. A lapse of ten years supposed from the date of Act II.*

SCENE I. *The vestibule of the palace of CREON, king of Corinth.*

*Enter LYCUS and DIRCETIS.*

LYCUS.

Gods, can it be ? He woo another bride !

DIRCETIS.

Why dost thou doubt me ? Of Medea's wrongs  
Wouldst thou be witness ? Thou shalt hear thy lord  
Woo the king's daughter with persuasive tongue.

LYCUS.

Jove, dost thou see this treachery ? Hapless dame !  
To punish Jason's enemies she sped  
To far Iolcos, nor divined that foes  
To her more dire remained at Corinth. She  
Who ten long years shared Jason's wanderings  
And soothed his cares ! O foul dissembler ! he  
With fond embraces greeted her return,  
And hailed the gods with thanks. How could she doubt  
His constancy ! Yet, outcast from his love,  
She must behold the claims of wife and mother  
Crushed by a rival !

## DIRCETIS.

Pity for her wrongs  
Prompted my speech. I, too, am foreign here,  
And know what pangs a stranger must endure,  
Bereft of friends. But see where Jason comes.  
Retire ; his words will soon attest my truth.

[*Exeunt.*]

(Enter JASON and ICARUS.)

ICARUS.

Is Jason, at this joyous season, sad ?  
What gratitude from men may gods expect,  
If he, on whom their choicest gifts they shower,  
Repay their smiles with frowns ?

JASON.

Knows not my friend,  
The gods bestow no good without alloy ?

ICARUS.

By Hymen, whom thy discontent insults,  
I blame thy folly ! What hath Heaven withheld ?  
When from usurping Pelias you fled,  
Here did the gods appoint a safe retreat,  
And Creon, Corinth's king, inspired by them,  
Received the exile with a father's love.

JASON.

Have I denied the reverence of a son,  
Or from the favoring powers the sacrifice  
Due to their grace withheld ?

## ICARUS.

New favors call  
For present thanks ; thou who so late receivedst  
The fair Creusa from her royal sire  
Shouldst talk of no alloy in happiness.  
A king's alliance, and a royal bride !  
Yet who that saw thy brow o'ercast with gloom  
Would think thou wert thus blest ?

## JASON.

Cease, cease, my friend !

The gods bear witness that my gratitude  
Keeps measure with their bounty ! Yet my heart  
Forebodes, 'midst present blessings, future ill.  
Though thou recall'st my promised royal bride,  
Divorced Medea drives her from my thoughts ;  
My fancy paints Creusa's beaming smile  
Chased by Medea's frown, and, e'en amid  
The hymeneal songs, her vengeful cries  
Will seem to reach my ears.

## ICARUS.

Does Jason's heart  
Sink 'neath such fantasies ? What canst thou fear  
From her, who for thy love resigned each tie  
Of Nature's framing ?

## JASON.

Nay, thou know'st her not !  
As she resigned each native tie for love,  
So will she rend each fibre which that love

Has twined around her heart, as sacrifice  
Meet for the altar of Revenge, ere fail  
To win the ruthless deity. But cease !  
She comes whose ear such converse must not meet.

(Enter CREUSA.)

Welcome, bright queen of Jason's heart ! But say,  
Why is thy cheek thus pale, and why do tears  
Bedim the lustre of thine eyes ?

CREUSA.

Alas !

Divin'st thou not the cause ? She has returned  
Whose rage I dread, whose name I scarce dare speak.

JASON.

Why doth Creusa fear ? Hath Jason's love  
No power to chase such terrors ? Hath thy heart  
More dread of her than confidence in me ?

CREUSA.

Jason, forgive my tears ! They flow for thee,  
My father, and myself. Nor strength nor skill  
Avail against Medea's arts. She comes,  
With hands imbrued in Pelias' blood. 'Gainst me  
How will her jealous wrath now burn ! Alas !  
I blame her not ; for have I not won him,  
To lose whose love were death to me ? Shouldst thou,  
A few years hence, e'er turn from me as now  
From her —

JASON.

No, by the Queen of Heaven !

---

CREUSA.

The oath

Was once Medea's ; she believed, — as I do.

JASON.

My youthful fancy to Medea's charms  
Fell captive, for in her I loved my life,  
Which she alone could save ; a star of hope  
She rose above the gloomy cave of death,  
And marked with friendly beam the path of safety.  
I saw, obeyed, and triumphed ; but my heart  
No ruler knew, until Creusa's glance  
Subdued its freedom.

CREUSA.

What revenge will seem

Too dire for this desertion ? What revenge  
On me, my father, thee, perchance, — but no !  
Thee she could never harm ! Hath she one spark  
Of woman's nature 'neath a woman's breast,  
Although her wrath could devastate the world,  
Above the ponderous ruin Jason still  
Would stand in safety. If she ever loved,  
She could not hate thee.

JASON.

Let thy idle fears  
For me and for thyself fade with that thought.

CREUSA.

Icarus, dost thou call my terrors idle ?

ICARUS.

Ay, lady ; think'st thou that a woman's arm  
Can reach this palace, penetrate the shield  
A father's and a lover's care presents,  
To plant the avenging knife within thy heart ?

CREUSA.

You smile : 't is true ; I fear I know not what.  
Adieu ; I 'll teach myself to think with ye.

JASON.

The gods protect thee, gentle one !

CREUSA.

And thee ! [Exit.]

JASON.

A harder task remains, — Medea's wrath  
To rouse, and to restrain ; — if that the last  
Lie in the compass of a mortal's skill ;  
If not, why, let her rage ! Creusa's charms,  
The king's alliance, all combine to urge  
My purposed nuptials. Creusa's love  
Hath chased the gloom that gathered round my heart.  
The future to the gods ! be mine the present !

[Exit.]

## SCENE II.

*An apartment in the palace of JASON. MEDEA and IANTHE.*

IANTHE.

PRINCESS, to-day ten circling years have fled  
Since we left Colchis.

## MEDEA.

Think'st thou I forget,  
Because my tongue no telltale echo gives  
Of my heart's converse ?

## IANTHE.

I but thought how great  
The changes Time hath made in ten years' flight.

## MEDEA.

Ten vanished years ! — each year replete with bliss !  
And Jason still is fond and faithful, still  
Gazes upon me with a lover's eye,  
Raves of my beauty with a lover's tongue ;  
Still is as grateful for his wife's devotion,  
As when from earthly foes and magic snares  
Her power first rescued him. What hath that wife  
To ask of earth or heaven, beyond the gift  
Of such a husband, loving and beloved ?

## IANTHE.

And dost thou spare, amid this happiness,  
No recollection to thy native land ?

## MEDEA.

Ah, many a tender thought flies back to thee,  
My childhood's home, much loved, though rude ! Ten  
years !  
Why, I was but a child then, — Nature's child, —  
With no delight beyond that mother's face,  
Making her mysteries familiar things.  
I thought I had scanned all ; but Jason came,

And his eye was my tutor in a page  
Which till that hour I had passed idly by.

IANTHE.

How thou hast proved the beauty of that page,  
A wondering world bears witness. Constancy,  
Wisdom, devotion, all have but one aim,  
Unfaltering tributaries to thy love !

MEDEA.

Love is my life ! and should I not give all  
The treasures which the gods have granted me,  
To feed its sacred and mysterious flame ?

IANTHE.

E'en if the flame should mount, with tyrant power,  
And, 'mid her rites, consume the priestess ?

MEDEA.

Ay,

To keep the flame undying I would yield  
My life rather than live to see it wane,  
Expire, and leave my heart to dark despair !  
Gods, e'er I know the agony to live  
Unloved of him who sways my every thought,  
O, snatch my life, and I will bless the stroke !

IANTHE.

Did I not know thy soul, I should exclaim,  
A wife of yesterday might dream such dreams !

MEDEA.

A wife of yesterday ! — Hath Love with Time  
Such close alliance, that old age to both

Comes with the same alloy of clouds, and cares,  
And chill indifference to mortal joys ?  
Ah, no ! Time is but for the form we wear ;  
Love is the soul, which hath no bonds with Time.  
For ever young, with wing untamed, he soars  
On to the future, sorrow, care, and death  
Made radiant by his smile.

IANTHE.

Such love as this  
E'en Love himself knows not !

MEDEA.

So Jason read it in Medea's heart,  
And feel it in his own, I care not, though  
The god to Lethe's waves consign his shafts,  
And leave the world to friendship's calmer reign.

(Enter JASON.)

JASON.

What, doth Medea ask for Friendship's reign ?

MEDEA.

Not while Love's flame survives in Jason's breast.

JASON.

If that expire ?

MEDEA.

expire ! The gods forbid !

JASON.

Nay, start not at a jest !

MEDEA.

Will my lord jest

On such a theme ? As well mightst thou lay bare  
This heart, thine altar, tear it from its place,  
And cast it quivering from thy grasp to earth,  
As jest thus of a tie to me so dear,  
So sacred, that to sever it would be  
To loose each human feeling from my breast,  
To make me desperate, outcast from my kind,  
Hating myself, the world, and thee !

JASON.

Even so ! [Aside.]

Thou paint'st a Fury's, not a woman's, love !  
But let not fancy torture thee ; the world  
Hath real ills enough.

MEDEA.

But not for me !

I dread, — I know no ill when thou art by.  
Exile and want, disgrace, the hate of men,  
And wrath of gods, I could endure, nor waste  
A care on them, so Jason lived and loved !

JASON.

The fiend Remorse is busy at my heart.  
Can I again inspire such love, or lives  
A woman, save Medea, in whose soul  
A passion ardent, pure, as this can burn ? [Aside.]

MEDEA.

My lord, why on this day is thy brow sad ?

JASON.

Men oft have cares which women need not share.

## MEDEA.

Hath Jason cares Medea cannot share ?  
Ah ! strange and heavy should that sorrow be  
Which clouds thy heart from mine.  
Why speak'st thou not ? Since first our fates were joined,  
Ne'er hast thou known a care or braved a toil  
Which by my love has not been lighter made,  
    r vanquished by my skill.

## JASON.

Medea, list !  
Not grateful is it to a warrior's ear,  
That even a wife should boast her benefits :  
Remembrance is his part, and silence hers.

## MEDEA.

Thou know'st that mine is not the ignoble soul  
Which prompts a boaster's tongue. I boast of naught  
Save of thy love, which made me what I am,  
Thy equal partner, not thy household slave, —  
As Grecian dames to Grecian lords must be, —  
But worthy deemed by thee to aid thy councils,  
To share thy wanderings, and assuage thy woes.  
I boast my husband when I talk of these.  
    •  
Tell me, what care oppresses thee ?

## JASON.

Not long

Wilt thou remain in ignorance.

## MEDEA.

I felt

Thou couldst not long exclude me from thy heart.  
Why does the darkness deepen on thy brow ?  
Thou 'rt ill ! Thou canst not hide it from thy wife, —  
From her, who, taught by love, reads in thy glance  
Each shade of joy and pain. Surely thou 'rt ill !

JASON.

Not ill, Medea, not oppressed with cares  
Beyond my own poor skill to overcome.  
Content thee, thou mistak'st.

MEDEA.

I am content,  
If for Medea's sake thou 'lt clear thy brow,  
And greet this day with smiles.

JASON.

And why this day ?

MEDEA.

Is Jason's heart so changed, that he forgets  
The day which once he hailed with fondest joy ?  
If thou forgett'st, ah ! why should I remember  
That on this day I fled my native shores, —  
My father's court, where I was as a queen, —  
Lest all for Love, and in his smile found all ?

JASON.

True ; and e'en then thou didst not look more fair,  
Nor fell thy words more sweetly on my ear,  
Than now, when lip and eye speak soft reproach !

MEDEA.

O, not reproach ! Thee I could ne'er reproach !

JASON.

Mayst thou think ever thus ! — I have essayed  
A task beyond my power ; to others' lips  
I must commit it. (*Aside.*) Fare thee well awhile.  
The king requires my presence at the palace.

MEDEA.

Wilt thou not give this day to me ?

JASON.

The king  
Is our protector, friend ; would it be well  
To let his wishes pass unheeded ?

MEDEA.

Go ;

I would not counsel thee ingratitude.  
But thou wilt see our sons ?

JASON.

It matters not ;

I shall return ere long.

[*Exit.*

MEDEA.

Methinks I hear  
Their voices. Go, Ianthe, bid them wait.

[*Exit Ianthe.*

“ It matters not ! ” Why do those careless words  
Sink in my heart like the stern voice of some  
Ill-boding oracle ? “ It matters not ! ”  
Ah, could I think his heart dictated them !

[*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The palace of Jason. MEDEA and IANTHE.*

MEDEA.

My husband loves another, and I hear it,  
Yet cannot die, and cheat the avenging fiends  
Who hurl this venom'd serpent at my breast !

IANTHE.

Nay, princess, yield thee not to such despair ;  
Reject not hope so rashly.

MEDEA.

Cease, Ianthe !

Talk not of hope to me ! talk of despair,  
Of madness, hate, revenge, of every fiend  
The envious gods let loose upon mankind !

IANTHE.

Dear lady, call to mind past happiness.

MEDEA.

I have no memory save for misery.  
Rememberest thou that night of bliss, — of woe, —  
When from my native shores our vessel sped ?  
Gods ! had mine been like other mortal hearts,  
That night had seen its last convulsive throb !

Still doth imagination picture him,  
My much-loved brother, writhing at my feet.  
Ah ! why did Fate assign my hand a task  
Which nature, reason, and my sex forbade ?  
Ten years ! It cannot be ! — 't was yesterday !  
If it were not, would he lie bleeding there,  
A sister's weapon in the ghastly wound ?

IANTHE.

Dear lady, shake these horrid fancies off.

MEDEA.

Release me, let me seize the telltale steel !  
My father must not know Medea's hand  
Thus, with a Fury's grasp, hath dashed to earth  
His fondest hopes ! — Ah ! whither has it fled ?  
Janthe, didst thou not behold —

IANTHE.

Nothing,

Dear lady, nothing !

MEDEA.

Was it madness, then ?

Jove, leave me reason, though it only serve  
T' enhance the ills you shower on me ! 'T is past !

IANTHE.

Thank Heaven ! O princess, calm this frenzied grief !

MEDEA.

Thou talk'st to me of calmness ! Hadst thou known  
The wrongs that I sustain, — hadst thou e'er laid  
Home, country, friends, thought, feeling, kindred blood,

---

Upon Love's altar with unfaltering hand,  
And seen the gifts received but to be spurned,  
Nor with thy clamor roused earth, heaven, and hell,  
Then mightst thou argue thus, and I would hear ;  
But now I could go mad, and rend the air  
With maniac shrieks, and call aloud on Death  
To end this woe, for Jason was my life.

## IANTHE.

Calm thee, till he appear ; trust not the tale  
From any lips save his. Thy agony,  
The love which prompts it, and thy matchless charms,  
Will chase this passing folly ; he will be  
Again thine own.

## MEDEA.

Never ! by Juno's self !  
The temple which Love reared within my heart  
Was based on honor ; Jason has destroyed  
The glorious pedestal ; prone to the earth  
The baseless fabric, with its inmate, falls,  
Nor leaves a vestige by which man can say,  
Here dwelt the heart's great tyrant. With the fall  
Earth shall resound, all hell start back aghast ;  
For crushed and writhing 'neath the ponderous mass  
My foes shall lie.

## IANTHE.

Cease, dearest lady, cease  
These vengeful threats ! Ere this, to Creon's ear  
Some busy foe hath borne thy frenzied cries.

Rouse not his fears, lest with tyrannic hand  
He crush thy sons, thyself.

MEDEA.

Let him essay !

IANTHE.

Nay, if not prudence, let thy pride restrain thee.  
Grant not the triumph to thy foes to see  
Medea, empress of her sex, o'erwhelmed  
Beneath their treachery.

MEDEA.

Through all things else  
I have been more than woman ! Can I now,  
In outraged nature's agony, be less ?  
The partial gods assign no blest abode  
On Lethe's banks for woman ; yet she finds  
In Love's protecting arms Elysium,  
Nor asks a bliss beyond ; but cast from thence,  
Say, whither shall she fly ? Despair in front,  
On each side hatred and revenge ! above,  
Dire madness hovers, and his hissing snakes  
Cling to her brain, and goad her on to frenzy !

IANTHE.

Cease, lady ; steps approach ! — It is the king !  
Frowns clothe his brow —

MEDEA.

The king ! What would he here ?

(Enter CREON.)

Why do pride, pomp, and power approach the abode

Of desolation ? Say, what would the king  
Of one so humble ?

CREON.

Doth Medea own  
League with humility ? Thy scorn-wreathed lip,  
Thine eye gleaming with hate, too well betray  
The soul within, e'en had thy words been slow  
To show thy treachery.

MEDEA.

Treachery, Creon !

CREON.

Ay.

Thy vengeful ravings, by a faithful tongue  
Borne to my ear, are treachery to me,  
Whose walls received, whose power protected, thee,  
When suppliant thou sought'st what I bestowed,  
A kingly hospitality.

MEDEA.

Jove, shall I hear

In silence taunts like these ? Do monarchs stoop  
To barter hospitality ? If so,  
May Heaven bear witness at how dear a rate  
Thy kingly aid is prized ! Henceforth sink pride,  
And perish generosity ! Let shame  
And maiden modesty no more abide  
In Corinth's walls, since Corinth's monarch holds  
No memory of the first, and for the last, —

Let bards relate how Corinth's princess wooed  
And won Medea's lord !

CREON.

Rail, haughty dame,  
But bear thy clamors far from Corinth ; go,  
Seek with thy sons a new abode. Hear'st thou ?  
Thou art an exile.

M E D E A .

Creon !

CREON.

It is fixed.

M E D E A .

Lost ! lost ! (*Aside.*) Monarch, once more thy suppliant  
Behold me ! How have I deserved this doom ?  
What is my crime ?

CREON.

Thy threats of vengeance 'gainst  
My daughter and myself. Thy former acts  
Attest thee bold and resolute ; both swift  
To plan, and prompt to execute, the deeds  
Thy rage inspired. There is no change  
In thy proud spirit ; thou hast sworn to wreak  
Ruin on me and on my house. Fly hence !  
Thy life is in my power ; I but command  
Thy absence.

M E D E A .

Doth the king of Corinth fear  
A woman ? Compassed by rank, power, and wealth,

Had I the will, where should I find the means  
To pass those mighty barriers ? With no friends  
To raise the cry of vengeance for my sake,  
No warriors at my call, nor wealth have I  
To purchase them, how could I injure thee ?  
My sole reliance this weak woman's hand, —  
This hand, which, fatal only to myself,  
Each native tie hath severed ! Alien  
From my own land, and exiled now from thine,  
Alone I stand. Fear not, but pity me !  
Poor, friendless, broken-hearted, desolate !

CREON.

Lady, the strength which lies in manhood's arm  
Hath never caused me fear ; how then should thine ?  
Thy dangerous wisdom, superhuman arts,  
I dread, and will avoid.

MEDEA.

Unhappy me !

Let not my frantic ravings steel thy heart  
Against my woes ! Have I not cause for frenzy ?  
If in my agony my tongue o'erleaped  
The bounds of wisdom, canst thou not forgive  
A maniac's unmeaning rashness ?

CREON.

Rise,

Nor hope to shake me ; it is wisdom's part  
To strangle danger in its birth, nor, led  
By ill-placed confidence or timeless pity,

---

Delay until it rise in giant strength,  
Defy our grasp, and hurl us to destruction.

M E D E A .

As thou hast said, I am within thy power ;  
But yet, my lord, reflect how it may stand  
With thine own honor to deprive me thus,  
In wanton cruelty, of the sole good  
Fate leaves me, — shelter for myself and sons.  
I cannot need it long ; grant but a day,  
One day, to think which way my steps should turn !

C R E O N .

Ask not an hour ; I will not give it thee.

M E D E A .

I do not ask thy pity for myself ;  
I need it not. What matters it to me,  
That the gods pour the tempests of the air  
Upon my head ? Commotion wilder far  
Must ever rage within. Think not I care  
Or when or where I drain the cup of life  
So early poisoned ; better at once to do 't,  
Than drag a miserable chain of years  
In hopeless agonies ! But for my sons,  
Have pity on them, they are fatherless !  
Turn not away, for thou hast children ; thou  
Hast seen thy babes cling to a mother's breast ;  
Hast seen that mother's eyes bedewed with tears,  
Born from excess of rapture ! Paint to thyself  
That mother and those sons by strangers' hands

---

Torn rudely from their home ; exposed, alas !  
To the cold gaze of an unfeeling world ;  
To woe and want, perchance to death ; — then steel  
Thy heart against a mother's cries ! Thou canst not !  
Creon, by all the gods, grant me this day !

CREON.

Thou hast prevailed ! Receive thy boon ; “ but mark,  
That if to-morrow's dawn behold thee here,  
Thy sons, with thee, shall die ! ” \* It is decreed.

MEDEA.

Dread monarch, thanks !

(Exit CREON.)

“ Rouse thee, Medea ! wake  
Thy deepest science ! meditate, devise !  
Call forth thy terrible power ! The contest now  
Demands a daring spirit ! ” In the hour  
Of their insulting triumph, let thy foes  
Learn to distinguish 'twixt a dame of Greece,  
Submissive to her tyrant lord's decrees,  
And her from Phoebus sprung, the tameless Colchian,  
Whose hand shall “ vindicate her glorious birth ” !

[Exit.]

\* The lines within quotation marks are from the Medea of Euripides.

## SCENE II.

CREON's palace. Enter JASON and CREUSA.

JASON.

No more alarms, my fair ; thy prudent sire,  
To rid thy breast of every fear, hath doomed  
Her whom thou dread'st to exile ; she will turn  
Her steps from Corinth's walls, nor evermore  
With jealous ravings mar thy peace.

CREUSA.

And thou ? —  
Will no regrets —— Nay, frown not ! Canst thou think  
I doubt thy love ? I could not, though the world  
Proclaimed thee suitor for my father's power,  
And not his daughter's heart.

JASON.

And who has dared ——

CREUSA.

Nay, nay ! 't was but a slave, a spoiled attendant,  
Whose love for me prompted her jealous fears.  
The king approaches.

(Enter CREON.)

Father, dost thou bring  
Assurance of my peace and safety ? Ah ! —  
You pause ! My father, say not 't is delayed !

CREON.

But for a day.

CREUSA.

Thy daughter's happiness  
May hang upon that day.

CREON.

Thou tak'st it gravely ;  
But let it not be said the daughter's heart  
Was sterner than her sire's. Medea's tears,  
Her supplications, swayed my too harsh purpose.  
She prayed but for a day, a single day,  
To frame some plan ; not for herself, but for  
Her tender sons, with moving words, and looks  
More moving, she besought my pity ; prayed  
I would not, through my fears of her, cast them,  
Thus unprovided, on a heartless world.

JASON.

My children ! No ! no power shall rend them from me. [Aside.  
What more, my lord ?

CREON.

In very shame I yielded ;  
But warned the dame, that on the morrow's dawn  
She, with her sons, must leave this land or die.

JASON.

Creon, they are my sons ! They shall not go !  
Let me behold in Corinth one so bold  
As harm those innocents ! Am I not he  
Who braved fierce Ætes and his savage horde  
In search of fame ? Shall I not brave much more  
For them ? Here they remain !

CREON.

It cannot be !

Jason, dispute it not ; the king commands.

JASON.

No king's command shall make them fatherless !

CREON.

That thine own act hath done ; and that thy sons  
Should now remain in Corinth, — that within  
My house they should be trained, who, grown to manhood,  
Must prove its direst foes, — would show me mad  
Beyond conception.

JASON.

Will they not be trained  
By me, thy grateful friend, — thy son ?

CREON.

Ere this

They know their mother's rage and hate ; its cause.  
Shouldst thou retain them here, they first receive  
Her lessons of revenge, — bear them in mind,  
Despite all other teaching, till the hour  
Occasion marks for vengeance bids them rise  
In hot rebellion for Medea's sake, —  
Foment foul discord in my realm ; perchance  
In ruin whelm my house !

JASON.

Yet they are mine.

CREON.

But wouldest thou rend them from their mother's arms ?

If she must fly, make her not desolate  
Of all life's blessings. Leave her sons ; their smiles  
Will calm her rage, their innocent caresses  
Soften her harsh resolves ; to her heart's fever  
They best can minister.

JASON.

Spoke she of me ?

CREON.

No.

JASON.

Didst thou deem her grief or rage most strong ?

CREON.

Sunk in despair she seemed, her every thought  
Centred upon her sons, condemned, perchance,  
To bitter want.

JASON.

That fear no more must rack her.

CREUSA.

No ; let the treasures of the royal house  
Be showered upon Medea. Wealth will purchase  
Home, country, friends. O, may she find them all  
Far, far from Corinth ! Whither goes my lord ?

JASON.

My sons demand my care.

CREUSA.

Trust not thyself

In that fell woman's power ! A messenger  
Can do thy will. Can she not murder thee ?

JASON.

Nay, nay, Creusa, check this folly.

CREUSA.

No !

Thou must not go ! I cannot suffer it !

Thy wife, thy bride, implores !

JASON.

My children's wants

With stronger voice command me. Nay, weep not.

Should I to menial hands intrust such charge,

Medea would repel my offered aid

As insult. Fare thee well. Surely no ill

Can reach thee in my absence ; and for me,

Trust thou my safety to Medea's love.

[*Exit.*

CREUSA.

A mournful bride am I, who see my lord

By such contending interests swayed. Alas,

My father ! by thy mercy shown to her

Thy daughter's heart is rent.

CREON.

Think not of it.

'T is but a day. How quickly will it pass !

[*Exeunt.*



## SCENE III.

*In the palace of JASON. Enter LYCUS and IANTHE, meeting.*

LYCUS.

How fares the princess, dear Ianthe ? Say,  
Is she now calm ?

IANTHE.

No ; bathed in tears, she yields  
To grief more harrowing than her wildest rage.

LYCUS.

Alas ! who shall console her ? who withdraw  
The poisoned arrow from her heart, and heal  
The rankling wound ? Not Esculapius' self !  
But lo ! my lord approaches.

IANTHE.

Ha ! what seeks  
The traitor here ? Why, shameless, doth he come  
T' inflict new torture, by his hateful presence,  
Upon his writhing victim ?

LYCUS.

Peace ! She comes !

(Enter MEDEA.)

IANTHE.

Dear lady !

LYCUS.

Gracious princess !

## MEDEA.

Faithful friends,

Your presence 'mid this scene of desolation  
Brings back the phantom Hope, who else had fled  
This desecrated fane, my heart. I gaze  
On ye, and feel I am not yet alone.

## LYCUS.

No, lady, we are still what we have been,  
Thy friends, thy servants, slaves,—what thou wouldest  
have us,—  
To live or die for thee.

## MEDEA.

My thanks, good Lycus,

All I can offer, thy fidelity  
Commands. A step familiar to my ear  
Approaches ; 't is my lord's ! What said I ? His  
Who was my lord. O for a moment's respite !  
*(Motions Lycus and Ianthe, who withdraw. Enter Jason.)*  
My husband ! *(He turns from her.)* It is past, and I am  
marble ! *(Aside.)*  
Com'st thou, a foe to Creon's lenity,  
To haste my flight from Corinth, with my sons ?

## JASON.

Unjust ! Not I, but thine unbridled passion  
Hath caused thy exile. Thou, forsooth, must rave  
Of vengeance 'gainst the monarch whose strong arm  
So long hath shielded thee ; ingratitude  
Can claim no pity. But for this, my voice

Had been attended, and thou still hadst found  
A home in Corinth. Thy intemperate wrath  
Has raised suspicion 'gainst thee. Thou must fly ;  
Nor thou alone ; but, for their mother's folly,  
My sons must suffer. They must range with thee,  
Homeless and friendless.

## MEDEA.

It is well ! Rail on !  
Declare the wrongs I 've done thee ! Name each fault  
For which I owe atonement ! I, in meekness,  
As doth become a Grecian wife, will listen.

## JASON.

This only will I say ; had thy rash tongue  
Yielded to reason's dictates, still my sons  
Had known a father's care, still hadst thou dwelt  
In peace and safety.

## MEDEA.

No ! Think'st thou my soul  
Is humbled by thy insults to endure  
That the same land should hold thy new-chosen bride  
And me, the outcast from thy love ? O, never !  
Far rather would I dwell in endless night,  
The earth my couch, the heavens my canopy,  
The thunder-peal my music, the red flash  
Of angry Jove my torch, and savage beasts  
My sole companions !

## JASON.

Yet I would not wish

---

With thy barbaric tastes my sons infected.  
Here should they still have dwelt, here grown to man-hood,  
Sharing through my alliance with the king  
Each good that royalty bestows. By thee  
They suffer ; thy insensate ravings roused  
Wrath and suspicion in the king : — “ The sons  
Of such a mother must prove dangerous ” —

MEDEA (*interrupting*).

The king is wise ! most wise !

JASON.

“ We do not spare,  
In pity for their youth, the tigress’ whelps.”  
Such answer made he to my prayer.

MEDEA.

Thy prayer !  
Fervently urged, no doubt ! Nor would I wish  
My sons by thy ingratitude infected ;  
Their tender hearts, in the first bloom of youth,  
Poisoned by contact with thy perjured self.  
Better to dwell in poverty, with slaves  
Share toil and want, nor dream of higher birthright,  
Than to be trained the sycophants of courts,  
'Neath the cold shadow of a step-dame's frown !

JASON.

Nay, didst thou seek their good, not yielding thus  
To blinding rage and jealousy, thy wish  
Would be that Creon yet might grant their stay.

---

## MEDEA.

With me they go ! But whither ? " Ah, my country !  
Now I remember thee," — now toward thee  
Despairing cast my eyes ; for dare I hope  
A shelter in thy breast ? My father, too !  
No smile of love on his stern lip would speak  
A welcome to his child ! — False Greek ! for thee  
Have I betrayed my sire ! — for thee I bathed  
My hands in kindred blood ! — for thee I roam  
An outcast from the land where wealth and power  
Were slaves to me, — where I was as a queen !  
For thee I stooped from my high sphere, for thee  
Inured my woman's frame, my woman's heart,  
To toil and dangers ! How am I requited ?  
On my defenceless head are showered neglect,  
Falsehood, disgrace, and insult !

## JASON.

## Who can stem

The torrent of a woman's tongue ? Hadst thou  
The common reason of thy sex, thou hadst weighed  
With a more equal mind the good and evil,  
Which, as to all mankind, the Fates dispense  
To thee. I found thee in a savage land,  
Where men, more savage than their native wilds,  
Paid thee the blind obedience of fear ;  
Where a barbarian king, thy sire and tyrant,  
Ruled, as the lion rules his fellow-beasts.  
From that barbaric race, that land remote,

To Greece, the chosen seat of gods, I bore thee ;  
In that wild region hadst thou languished else,  
Obscure. Fame never stooped her pinion there ;  
But here thy name, thy wisdom, mighty deeds,  
Wide o'er the land resound ; sages commend,  
And warriors hear with wonder. Thus, by me,  
Renown, far dearer to thy heart than love,  
Has crowned thy wish —

## MEDEA.

Ungrateful as thou art,  
And shameless ! Fame, renown ! — talk'st thou of these  
To me, who, for thy sake have sacrificed,  
Save life and reason, all ? I thank the gods,  
They leave me these for vengeance !

## JASON.

This it is  
Brings exile, with its evil, on thyself  
And sons. Yet poverty, midst other griefs,  
They must not know. Lady, at thy command  
Are all my treasures ; freely take such store  
As may seem needful.

## MEDEA.

Deem'st thou me so fallen  
As to receive thy gold ? — gold from the hand  
That spurns me ? Never ! Let me first endure  
The sharpest pang which nature's wants inflict,  
And starve ignobly, ere accept thy bounty !

(Enter IANTHE with the two children.)

IANTHE.

O, let their smiles end this unnatural strife !

JASON.

My sons ! Thou wouldest not let them want ?

MEDEA.

With me

They suffer what the gods inflict. Farewell.

JASON.

Woman, thy rashness tempts the gods. Art thou  
A mother, and thus reckless of their welfare,  
Whom thou shouldst prize above all other blessings ?  
Think not I will abandon them ; the king  
Shall grant my prayer !

MEDEA.

And what will that avail thee ?

JASON.

Much ; here shall they remain. Can I intrust  
My sons to one so desperate ? No ! I 'll snatch  
From thy unnatural arms their tender frames.

MEDEA.

Sport with the thunder, and defy the lightning, —  
They may be merciful ; — but tempt no more  
Medea's wrath !

(*Exeunt MEDEA, IANTHE, and children.*)

JASON.

Infuriate as thou art,  
Place not the sufferings which thy stubborn spirit  
Now dooms thee to endure to Jason's charge ! [Exit.

## SCENE IV.

*In the palace of CREON. Enter CREON and CREUSA.*

CREUSA.

Not yet returned ! Not yet ! Alas ! strange fears  
Thicken around my heart ; unbidden tears  
Gush from my eyes. Avert the omen, gods !

CREON.

Why thus afflict thyself ? This day, to which  
Thy terrors cling, sinks 'neath the western wave.

CREUSA.

Slowly to my impatient eye it sinks.  
Fate hangs on Phœbus' chariot-wheels, and stays  
His fiery-footed coursers.

CREON.

And with Fate

Nor prayers nor tears avail. Go then, my daughter,  
Array thee for the banquet, and await  
Thy lord's return in patience.

CREUSA.

Patience, father !

Patience befits a slave. It is allied  
To dull indifference. They, who never knew  
The smile of happiness, could never feel  
The pangs which I endure, whose aching heart  
Fears lest each moment, as it onward flies

---



On its swift wings, should bear some gloomy cloud  
To veil that smile for ever. Even now  
Jason may writhe beneath some horrid spell  
Or fatal poison ! Who shall rescue him ?  
Is not that dire enchantress versed in charms  
To shorten life ? What human power can bid  
Defiance to her skill ? — Why lingers he ?  
Doth she still love him ? Then, perchance, her wiles,  
Her tears, her glowing beauty, have ensnared  
Again his heart ; perchance e'en now he vows  
Fidelity anew, and flies with her  
From Corinth and Creusa, self-exiled !  
O falsehood worse than death !

## CREON.

Have I not said,  
What Fate decrees no mortal can escape ?  
Banish thy fears. To be a warrior's bride,  
To train a warrior's sons, befits not her  
Whose heart falls captive to each fancied ill,  
And shrinks in coward weakness from the glance  
Of dark Misfortune, whom the gods ordain  
The monitor of mortals. Go ; let hope  
Drive from thy breast despondency.

(*Exit CREUSA.*)

Her fears,  
Despite my reason, sink into my heart.  
Medea's prayer I granted ; shame forbade  
That I — a man, a monarch — should refuse

A boon so slight ; such sternness had appeared  
A wanton cruelty. Could I confess  
My fears enforced me to 't ? Day vanishes,  
Yet Jason lingers. May the gods protect him ! [Exit.

## SCENE V.

*Palace of JASON. LYCUS and IANTHE.*

LYCUS.

I THANK the gods, Medea smiles again !

IANTHE.

So do not I. Trust me, there 's danger in 't.

LYCUS.

Nay, but she spoke of reconciliation.

IANTHE.

Strange ! can her brain —— But no, she 'll be herself  
Though all the world with Corinth league against her.  
Do thou her bidding, be thy life the forfeit.

LYCUS.

In that I am her slave. She comes.

(Enter MEDEA.)

Dear lady,

The gods give comfort to thy heart !

MEDEA.

They do,  
Good Lycus. Peace begins to fold again  
Her white wings o'er my breast. I pray thee bear

Such message to my lord ; say, 't is my prayer  
He will return to take my last farewell,  
And grant my pardon for the late offences  
Of an unbridled tongue ; and for my sons  
I would entreat his care ; bid him forget  
Their mother's folly, and, for their dear sakes,  
Attend me here. Haste, for time wanes apace.

(*Exit Lycus.*)

IANTHE.

Ay, lady, few and short the hours of safety  
Allotted us in Corinth.

MEDEA.

Us, Ianthe !

IANTHE.

Us, lady. Nay, look not so sadly on me.  
My husband and myself, by thee enfranchised,  
Are still the slaves of gratitude ; with thee  
In cities or in deserts we abide ;  
With thee we share whate'er the Fates decree, —  
Danger, or toil, or death. If to the first  
Thou 'rt doomed, why is the arm of Lycus strong,  
If not to ward it from thee ? If to toil,  
Our hands and hearts shall meet it ; if to death,  
Alone thou shalt not tread that gloomy path ;  
We follow through its shades —

MEDEA.

This, this is friendship !

To suffer such a sacrifice would prove

Me base as thou art pure ! Ah, no, Ianthe !  
The path which I have chosen too rugged, steep,  
Too full of dangers, is for mortal foot,  
Save mine, to press ; no friend may share it with me.  
Didst thou but dream its horrors, thou wouldest start  
From sleep as from an enemy, and dread  
To gaze around thee, lest thy sight be blasted  
By fiends and furies poured from Tartarus,  
T' inspire the monstrous vision.

IANTHE.

No, Medea ;  
Earth cannot show the danger whose stern front  
Would awe me from thy side ; my heart might quail,  
'T is true, but not my faith. Then, dearest lady,  
Let me still follow thee !

MEDEA.

Think not of it !  
E'en I, who never knew dismay, could shrink  
From the dire view, and supplicate the gods  
To shroud it in its native gloom ! But no !  
Each moment, in distinctness more appalling,  
It grows before me, till its gorgon shapes  
Transform my heart to marble !

IANTHE.

Ah, my princess !  
Thy words are gloomy, but the fire of vengeance  
Gleams from thine eyes, betraying to my view  
The thought which fills thy soul ; thou meditat'st

Revenge as mighty as thy wrongs !

MEDEA.

Forget

That I have spoken, that thou hast dared divine  
My purposes ! Go, call my children hither.

IANTHE.

Thy children, lady ?

MEDEA.

Ay, my precious boys,  
Whom I had hoped to see their father train  
To serve the god of wars ! But mortal hope,  
Mortal presumption, Heaven delights to check,  
Lest the strong tide of earthly happiness  
Sweep from our hearts remembrance of the gods  
From whom our blessings flow. — Didst thou not hear  
My will ?

IANTHE.

Thy pardon, lady, but I feared —

MEDEA.

What dost thou fear ? What darest thou fear ? Ianthe,  
I brook no scrutiny ! — Yet stay, thy love  
Commands my confidence. Shall I go forth  
To misery whilst from my shattered hopes  
Another's bliss is springing, — another's heart  
Securely triumphing in Jason's love, —  
Another's charms receiving Jason's homage, —  
Another's form in confidence reposing  
On his protecting arm ? The thought is madness !

---

This new-made bride and her tyrannic sire  
Deem me their victim ! — Let them dream so ! — soon  
My hand shall chase the sweet delusion. Say,  
Is it not right ?

IANTHE.

Else would thy foes and friends  
Esteem thy vaunted courage, skill, and power  
As vanished quite, or thy strong soul subdued  
Beneath these wrongs.

MEDEA.

Such doubts shall ne'er be theirs.

A poison of such agonizing power  
As that which racked Alcides' iron frame  
I have prepared ; to the Corinthian bride  
Gifts will I send with this imbued ; and when  
These glittering snares adorn her form, fierce pangs  
And sudden death ensue. Go now, Ianthe ;  
By my sons' hands will I despatch the casket  
Which holds my sure but unseen vengeance. Go.

IANTHE.

For thine own safety, — hast thou thought on that ?  
Thy children, too, who shall preserve their lives ?  
Their blood and thine must flow in expiation.

MEDEA.

“ Hath life a blessing ” left, that I should fear  
The stroke that brings forgetfulness of ill ?  
Yet, though I dread no death they could inflict,  
Shall my foes boast that proud Medea's life

---

Was yielded to their power ? Never ! The gods  
Inspire me with a higher hope, and point  
A refuge far from hostile Corinth. Go !

(*Exit IANTHE.*)

Can she suspect ? Are my soul's agonies  
So stamped upon my face, that those who gaze  
Read the dire thoughts within ? Alas ! alas !  
O'erburdened Nature doth avenge herself  
By such betrayal of the wrongs she suffers.  
Yet with self-torture must I buy revenge,  
Or live, — the mockery of my foes. My skill  
Hath for this royal bride framed pangs as dire  
As hell itself can boast. He, whose false heart  
First caused my woes, — shall he escape ? Great Themis,  
With thy stern power inspire me ! He shall live  
To stand, like me, 'midst desolation, — live,  
Till the pure air seems burdened with a curse,  
The curse of hopeless life.  
O vengeance ! No mean sacrifice thy voice  
Demands, yet to thy ensanguined shrine all, all  
Thou canst require, I bring. — My sons ! my sons !

(*Enter the children.*)

SONS.

Dear mother !

MEDEA.

Gods ! have ye no mercy ? —none ?

SONS.

Do not weep, mother ! When our father comes

He 'll think we have grieved you, and will then be angry ;  
For he has said, if we would have him love us  
We must not give you pain ; and then he told us  
How you preserved his life from cruel men  
Who would have murdered him, had you not loved  
And taught him how to shun their snares.

MEDEA.

Cease ! cease !

FIRST SON.

O mother, do not look so strangely on us !  
When will my father come ? If you are troubled  
He will console you. Why does he go from us  
So oft, and stay so long ? 'T is almost night.

MEDEA.

Quite night ! — a night no sun shall e'er dispel.  
Poor boys ! you know not the funereal gloom  
Which o'erhangs ye, — frightful, endless night !

SECOND SON.

But when our father comes we shall not mind it ;  
For I have heard you say his smile could chase  
All darkness from your mind.

MEDEA.

My son, my son,  
Wouldst thou distract me ? Jason's smile ! Alas !  
No longer doth it beam for us. O traitor !  
Doth he deserve a son ? No. Let my hand,  
By justice armed, sweep from his sight each hope ! —  
Ah, wretched mother ! where are then thine own ?

Come to my heart, my sons, your only home !  
O hapless babes ! ye smile in the embrace  
Of misery, unconscious that the wretch  
To whom you cling, the daughter, wife, and mother  
Of princes, hath no shelter for your youth,  
No bulwark for your safety, but these arms !  
Yet can I cast ye thence ? Ah, no, my sons !  
Though wretched, outcast from my husband's love,  
There is a strange relenting in my heart  
Which whispers, " live for these, and in their smiles  
Find hope." I yield, and am again a mother !  
Why, to wound Jason's peace, should I inflict  
Upon myself a wound more deadly far ?  
Far from these hostile walls we 'll fly. But how  
Or whither ? How preserve my sons from want  
And danger ? Should death seize me on the way,  
Must they not perish ? Who, in all this land,  
Would look with pity on Medea's sons ?  
To fly with them is madness,— but to leave them  
Here, 'mid my foes, despair ; for those who see  
The royal house destroyed beneath my hands  
In their hot wrath would crush these helpless ones.  
No, by the gods ! Within their tender limbs  
Courses the blood of princes ! 'T is not fit  
That the rude touch of an ignoble foe  
Pollute these scions of a race of kings !  
Nor can my soul permit a hated Greek  
To triumph o'er Medea's slaughtered sons.

“ By me who gave them life death shall be given ! ”  
Are the gods just, who make oblivion  
The last, best gift a mother can bestow  
Upon her sons ? No ! Ye who proudly sit  
In cloudless glory on Olympus’ height,  
Who revel in the pleasures and the crimes  
Of man, your slave, yet on his frailties heap  
Sorrow and suffering, I defy ye all !  
Strong in despair I stand ! My children’s blood  
Shall flow, — libation grateful to the fiends  
Who goad my heart to frenzy ! Why not now ?  
Why not at once escape the ills that close  
Like waves around me ?

*(Drawing a dagger from her dress.)*

Steel, upon whose point  
The lurid fires of vengeance seem to play,  
And menace, as they gleam, my tardy hand,  
No longer shalt thou thirst ! Thy magic touch  
Shall free my sons and me ! To thy embrace  
My full heart leaps —

FIRST SON.

Mother, dear mother,  
Give me that knife.

MEDEA.

What wouldest thou with it, boy ?

SON.

Keep until I am a warrior, then  
Strike to the heart that cruel king of Corinth

Who spoke uncivil words to you this morning ! —  
Give me the knife !

MEDEA.

Take it and live, — for vengeance ! —  
Go, my beloved ones, hasten to Ianthe,  
And bid her send me, by your hands, a casket,  
Which on my couch she 'll find.

(*Exeunt Sons.*)

'T is Jason comes, —  
His heavy tread the index of his heart.  
Not such the step with which my lord once came !

(*Enter JASON.*)

JASON.

" I come at thy request, for though " thy rage  
Burn against me, my aim is still to serve thee.  
Whate'er thy wish, Medea, name it ; I  
Stand eager to fulfil it.

MEDEA.

My first wish  
Is thy forgiveness, Jason, for the passion,  
Unjust, imprudent, which I nursed against thee.  
'T is past ; calm reason hath resumed her reign  
Within my mind, and I have schooled myself  
To own the wisdom of thy new alliance.  
" O, be not thou like me perverse ! " I own  
The error of my judgment. We have loved.  
O, by the memory of those days, when love  
Was peace to us, though all the world breathed war,  
Forgive my selfish rage !

JASON.

All is forgiven ;  
Nor do I blame thee for the past ; — it is  
A woman's part to watch o'er household ties,  
And when by jealous fury warmed, forgot  
That love should yield to reason.

MEDEA.

Treacherous Greek,  
Where wert thou now had I remembered that ? [Aside.]

JASON.

These better counsels show that Time hath led  
Reason in triumph to her seat, and prove  
Thee wise beyond thy sex.

MEDEA.

And see, our sons !  
Come forth, my dear ones, haste, embrace your father.  
(Re-enter the children. They place a casket in their mother's hand.)  
“ Ah me ! the thought of some concealed ill  
Comes o'er my heart. Will you, my sons, live long  
To stretch your dear hands thus ? Unhappy me !  
These eyes have lately learned to weep, this heart  
To know what fear is.”

JASON.

Nay, subdue thy fears,  
Nor doubt my cares for them. My noble boys,  
The gods consenting, I shall yet behold  
Ye great and glorious in the state of Corinth.  
“ O, may I see you blooming in the pride

Of manhood, and to every virtue trained  
Superior to my foes ! But why is this ?  
Why stands the moist tear trembling in thine eye ?  
Why is thy pale cheek turned aside, as if  
Thine ear received my words unwillingly ? ”

MEDEA.

“ ‘T is nothing ; I was thinking of my sons.”

JASON.

“ Be cheered ; their welfare is my dearest care.”

MEDEA.

“ I will be cheered, and trust thee ; yet I am  
A woman, and by nature prone to tears.”

JASON.

“ Why o’er thy sons with such excess of grief ”  
Dost thou now bend ?

MEDEA.

“ I am their mother ; when  
Thy wish was breathed that they might live,” my heart  
Throbbed e’en to bursting, as the doubt arose  
Whether the gods would grant a wretch like me  
A boon so precious. Yet, my lord, of thee  
The favor next in value to their lives  
I would implore. In this Corinthian land  
I may not dwell, and though the king’s command  
Exiles my sons with me, let not his wrath,  
Let not my folly, tempt thee to desert them.  
O, let them live beneath thy care ! Not when  
To manhood grown will they require thy aid,

Thy watchful eye, thy love, and thy protection,  
But now. Entreat the king revoke his sentence.  
Protect them still, and may the gods reward thee !

JASON.

I will entreat his favor.

MEDEA.

Nay, implore,  
Command ! Denial hear not, understand not !  
Look on their tender frames. O, leave them not  
To know an exile's wants and woes ! They are  
Thine own, thy once-loved sons ; thou wilt not, no,  
Thou canst not, let them suffer !

JASON.

Are they not  
Still loved, still prized, beyond all other wealth ?  
Ah ! those confiding glances touch my heart  
More deeply than the favor or the wrath  
Of thousand kings could do. My warmest prayer  
Shall urge their stay.

MEDEA.

First to thy bride prefer  
Thy suit. O, could her woman's heart repel it ?  
And if a daughter's voice, a daughter's prayer,  
Present it to the king, is it not granted ?

JASON.

Right ; to Creusa will I breathe my wish ;  
Nay, they themselves, in childhood's melting tones,  
Shall utter it. Their infant innocence  
Who unrelentingly could view ?

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MEDEA.

His fate

He blindly, madly, doth pursue ! (*Aside.*) 'T is well ;  
And for her hands I have prepared a gift,  
A bridal gift, worthy a queen's acceptance.  
Within this casket lies a jewelled crown ;  
A gold-embroidered robe, of splendor such  
As Corinth never saw ; take it, my sons,  
Take it, and only in the princess' hands,  
As from the humblest of her servants, place it.  
Haste, and return successful !

JASON.

Doubt it not !

Who could resist their charms ? [Exit with children.]

MEDEA.

He loves them still !

Without there ! Order Lycus to my presence.

(Enter Lycus.)

LYCUS.

Can he be distant when Medea needs him ?

What would the princess ?

MEDEA.

What ? Perchance thy life !

LYCUS.

'T is thine ! What wouldest thou for it ?

MEDEA.

Yonder palace,

Whose torches rival the bright god of day,

Whose sounds of revelry grate on my ear  
Like shrieks of souls accursed ! A half-hour hence  
See that the gorgeous dome blaze forth in splendor,  
To fright Night from her throne, — a funeral pyre  
Meet for a queen's repose !

LYCUS.

Lady, 't is done.

[*Exeunt severall.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *The vestibule of JASON's palace.*

*Enter MEDEA and IANTHE.*

MEDEA.

'T is strange that I could sleep : we cannot always  
Wrestle successfully with nature's claims.  
Is it not midnight ?

IANTHE.

Lady, no ; your slumber  
Was short.

MEDEA.

I feel as if long hours had passed.

IANTHE.

Scarce half an hour.

MEDEA.

Even so ? — Had it been longer  
I should have missed the fairest sight that earth  
Can now afford my eyes. O ecstasy !  
The palace burns ! — it flames ! Like maddened steeds  
The fiery columns dart toward the clouds !  
Look, look, Ianthe ! Not Apollo's self,

As from their ocean bed his coursers spring  
And clothe the world with light, e'er to my soul  
Seemed half so glorious ! — Still onward bound,  
Untamed, untamable, fleet steeds of vengeance !  
Rear high your golden crests, and spurn control !

(Enter LYCUS.)

Welcome ! Thou 'rt safe ? — unharmed ?

LYCUS.

And unsuspected.

MEDEA.

I thank ye, gods ! But speak thy tidings ! haste !  
Pour in my greedy ear all that hath chanced.

LYCUS.

Unseen, 'neath the huge dome th' insidious torch  
I placed ; then mingled with the revellers.  
The youthful bride I saw ; her flowing locks  
Bound with the glittering crown, thy fatal gift.  
The 'broidered robe adorned her form. Jason,  
His sons dismissed to their wronged mother, turned  
His eyes, with love and glad ambition bright,  
Upon the princess —

MEDEA.

Peace, nor madden me !

LYCUS.

Pardon ! I would but say, e'en as he gazed  
Her color faded ; from her pallid lips  
A shriek of anguish burst ; fainting, she sank  
In Jason's arms, her graceful limbs convulsed

By direst agonies ; around his neck  
Her arms she strove to throw, and faintly murmured,  
“ The fatal casket ! O, the gifts were poisoned ! ”  
One groan, one struggle more, her pangs were ended.  
Joyful that death had come to her relief,  
I turned, and hither sped to bid thee fly,  
If flight be practicable.

MEDEA.

Doubt it not.

Yet one word more, — said Jason aught ?

LYCUS.

These words, —

“ Sorceress, thy heart’s best blood shall answer this ! ”

MEDEA.

An oracle’s decree were not more sure !  
To Juno’s shrine I haste. The secret passage,  
Not e’en by Jason known, unseen admits me  
Within the sacred walls. — My sons still sleep ?

IANTHE.

Ay, lady.

MEDEA.

On their lips I will impress  
A parting kiss, then fly. For you, my friends, —  
Hark ! — no ; they come not yet, — a slight delay  
Secures me. Speed my course, propitious powers,  
On to the goal of vengeance ! Let my foot  
Fail not, heart quail not, hand and eye shrink not !

[Exit.

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LYCUS.

She goes ; but to what end ? On every side  
Destruction presses. Who can turn aside  
The hot pursuit ? All Corinth will arise  
'T avenge a deed so bold.

IANTHE.

O Heaven, regard  
A wife and mother wronged !

LYCUS.

Did Heaven regard  
The woes of earth, these wrongs had never chanced.  
Yet will it show this mercy !—soon to end them.

IANTHE.

But how ?

LYCUS.

In death.

IANTHE.

Medea ! Death !

LYCUS.

Was she

Not born to die ?

IANTHE.

To conquer, not to yield,  
Seemed to my mind her birthright. Must she die ?

LYCUS.

How live ? how 'scape ?

IANTHE.

Will not the temple shield her

---

LYCUS.

Dream not of it. She nurses not the hope.

IANTHE.

Yet she was calm.

LYCUS.

The calmness of despair.

She goes to die.

IANTHE.

Nay, Lycus —— O, her sons !

They 'll ask me for their mother ! Must I teach them  
What death is ?

LYCUS.

May their mother's enemies

Leave thee the task !

IANTHE.

Gods ! Will they raise their hands  
Against those innocents ?

LYCUS.

Infuriate men

Pause not for such regards.

IANTHE.

I left them sleeping.

Can it be their last slumber ? Even now  
A sudden horror thrills me ! Watch thou here  
While to their couch I fly.

[Exit.

LYCUS.

To what purpose

Should I watch here ? To view yon towering pile

Yield to the insidious flames, and hear the cries  
 Of fear, and rage, and horror, which the crowd,  
 Who gaze, send upwards to the crimsoned heavens ?  
 But hark ! What flying step ?

(Enter IANTHE.)

IANTHE.

O Lycus !

LYCUS.

What hast thou heard or seen to fright thee thus ?  
 Ianthe, speak ; if but a word !

IANTHE.

Blood !

[Fain

LYCUS.

Blood !

Whose blood ? — She faints ! — Ianthe, my beloved,  
 Rouse thee ! Whose blood ? — What thought I dare n  
 speak

Distracts my soul ? — Ianthe ! — She hears not,  
 Breathes not, — perchance lives not ! Within there, help

[Exit, bearing IANTHE]

## SCENE II.

*Temple of JUNO ACREA. Altar and statue of the goddess. The bodies  
 MEDEA's children before the altar. MEDEA.*

MEDEA.

VENGEANCE hath had her perfect rites ! Now, now,  
 Welcome, ye hounds of Corinth ! — for I hear

Your distant voices clamoring for the prey,—  
Welcome ! A woman's and a mother's hand  
From your expectant grasp hath snatched the victims !  
In horrid safety lay the new-fledged eaglets,  
Whose eyes, just trained to meet the sun's fierce glance,  
Relentless fate hath sealed in death. Death ! — death ! —  
Unfathomable mystery ! my lips  
Speak thy familiar name, and yet my soul  
Rebels against thy power. Within my hand,  
Fearless, unfaltering, I hold the knife,  
Stern witness of thy doings, — near me lie,  
Insensible to hope or fear, the sons  
So loved, so worshipped, — but my heart feels not  
Thy presence, visible, palpable, though it be.  
For in the mirror of fast-flowing tears  
Imagination paints my children's forms ;  
The music of their voices fills my ear.  
Enchantment of as strong, as blinding power  
To mortal reason, as a mother's love,  
Nor heaven nor hell can boast !  
And yet this hand, nerved by infernal rage,  
Hath stopped the gushing stream of life in veins  
Fed from the fountain of this heart ! Ye gods !  
Dare I to talk of love ? The very fiends  
Mock at the sound, and, as the shivering earth  
Gapes 'neath my feet accursed, from the abyss  
Swarm the dire brood ; above, around, they press.  
They bar each avenue of escape, proclaim

Me homeless and deserted of my kind,  
And in my tortured ear their serpent tongues  
Hiss forth a welcome to their vengeful band.  
Hence, horrid shapes ! I 'm human still ! Hell taunts.  
Earth shakes, mankind rejects, yet here I sink  
Upon the bosoms of my slaughtered babes,  
Here dare repose, nor powers of earth or hell  
Shall fright me hence ; for here, at least, is peace.  
Peace to the young, pure hearts which ne'er shall throb  
Beneath the burden of Life's guilt and woe,  
And peace to me, who in this marble stillness  
Behold Heaven's dearest boon. And now one glance,  
One last embrace, — the last on earth ! The rose  
Hath scarce yet faded from your lips, my sons,  
The smile still lingers there, as life were loath  
To part from shrines so fair. Had ye awaked,  
As with despair's fell strength your wretched mother  
Grasped the dire steel, could I have done this deed ?  
No, by the gods ! The heart once tasked to the bound  
Of Nature's great endurance, oft a word  
May strike with sudden force the quivering chord,  
And free the wearied soul. Devoted babes,  
Had sleep released you from its bonds, one glance  
Had been Apollo's messenger ; my heart  
Had burst beneath its power, and ye had lived, —  
To glut Corinthian rage. I thank the gods  
It is not so ! Upon your cheeks the icy chill of death  
Thrills through my veins ; — 't is well, — I should be ster

For one more task remains, and then — to rest !  
The step I watch for comes. Vengeance, instruct me  
To teach his heart some knowledge of the pangs  
Which rend my own !

(Enter JASON.)

JASON.

Detested fiend, who tempt'st  
The wrath of men and gods, vainly thy feet  
Pollute this sacred dome ! What seek'st thou here ?

MEDEA.

Safety.

JASON.

Thy words profane the goddess. She  
Rears not her awful front within this dome  
To stay the hand of justice.

MEDEA.

Nay, but to  
Protect the injured.

JASON.

Let the guilty tremble !

MEDEA.

Tremble thou 'neath the chaste eye of the goddess,  
Stern guardian of connubial faith, and swift  
Avenger of the violated vow !  
Hence, ere the lightnings of her wrath consume thee !

JASON.

Restore my sons ! Haste, for a hundred swords  
Thirst for their blood and thine !

---

MEDEA.

Vainly they thirst.

Shall the pure stream, which, from the sacred fount  
Of great Apollo's heart, courses these veins,  
Brighten the dull steel of the robber race  
Of Sisyphus ? Phœbus himself forbids ;  
For me and for my sons a nobler way  
He opes, — a proud escape !

JASON.

Vain, frantic woman !

For thee there 's no escape. Without regret,  
I leave thee to thy fate. My children ! Speak !  
Reveal their hiding-place —

MEDEA (*taking a goblet from the altar*).

First let us pour

The full libation.

JASON.

Peace ! Darest thou profane  
The sacred rites, and with thy blood-stained hands,  
To the pure wife of Jove —

MEDEA.

Nay, to the dead !

JASON.

The dead ! What dead ? Speak, woman ! hast thou  
dared —

MEDEA.

I have not dared ; — how should I dare, whose heart  
Hath no communings with the spectral form

---

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Which men call Fear ? — but I have done a deed  
Shall make earth tremble, and the pale moon shrink  
Beneath her canopy of clouds ; and, more,  
Shall teach the tyrant, man, that we, the weak,  
Frail beings, whom he fain would keep his slaves,  
Can rise in the strong armor of the soul,  
And hurl him to his native dust ! Behold !

[*Showing the knife.*]

JASON.

Yon crimson stain ! Say whence ! O gods, the view  
Curdles my blood with horror ! I must doubt  
Or die ! Thou hast deceived, to torture me ;  
I will forgive, and save thee, if thou wilt  
But say 't is not —

MEDEA.

It is — thy blood and mine !

[*JASON falls senseless.*]

Well sped, keen shaft of vengeance ! Let me gaze  
My last upon the form whose peerless beauty  
Bewildered my young heart ! How changed am I,  
Since 'neath the wild, impetuous sway of Love  
I bowed, and, confident in Jason's faith,  
Braved the rude dangers of the deep, and sought  
This hostile shore ! Then, then I loved, — I loved  
As now I hate, ay, loathe, the prostrate form  
By falsehood stricken ! At my feet he lies,  
Unconscious of his woes, and I, who slew  
My sons, in slumber smiling, hold the knife

---

Above his breast ; yet him I could not strike  
Were worlds the price ! He was my husband ! — was ! —  
O, what an age of woe that “ was ” contains !  
My heart’s whole wealth was his ; my very being  
Seemed centred in his life and happiness ;  
Madly I loved, as madly have I punished !  
Yet, by the immortal gods, I could not harm him !  
O woman, to thy first, last, only love,  
What wondrous memories cling ! True, thou mayst hate,  
Condemn, despise, yet canst not all forget !  
How like to death this torpor ! Yet he lives,  
A victim sacred to the gods !

JASON.

Ah me !

Do I still live, or have I followed those  
I love to Pluto’s realm ? Ha ! I remember !  
Hast thou no lightnings, Jove ?

MEDEA.

Ay, to my hand

Hath he intrusted them ; ‘t is thine to suffer !

JASON.

Woman, fiend, murderer, hence ! Thou second Gorgon  
Whose baleful beauty proves a curse more fell  
Than hers, what hast thou done ? They were thine  
own, —

Drew from thy bosom life, and, pillow'd there,  
Slept the sweet sleep of infancy ; from thee  
Their rosy lips first learned to lisp the name,

---

The tender name, so outraged by thy deeds ;  
They called thee “ mother,” yet thy hand has slain  
them !

MEDEA.

By thee they perished ! Thy foul wrongs to me,  
Thy vows profaned, thy household gods deserted,  
Thy wife, thy sons, abandoned, to indulge  
Thy roving fancy and thy black ambition,  
Called with the thunder’s voice on Heaven for vengeance !  
And it is granted !

JASON.

Such a vengeance ! What  
Should woman do with vengeance ? But thou art  
No woman, but a Fury ‘scaped from hell ;  
“ False to thy father, traitress to thy country,”  
And stained in youth with kindred gore !

MEDEA.

Shameless !

Darest thou reproach me with the crimes which owe  
Their birth to thee ? Strange to my soul they were,  
Till thy false, fatal love darkened each sense  
To all things but thy safety. ’T was for thee  
Absyrtus bled. The deed was then a virtue,  
But now, — yet he ’s avenged !

JASON.

He is ;

“ The wrathful Furies punish on my head  
Thy crimes.”

---

**MEDEA.**

Have they spared me ?

**JASON.**

Thy heart must bleed ; —

But no ! 't is marble, and thy fiendish nature  
 Thirsted for blood, " thou tigress, of a soul  
 More wild, more savage, than the Tuscan Scylla ! "  
 Sought'st thou revenge for thy imagined wrongs,  
 Why not in my heart's blood imbrue thy hands ?

**MEDEA.**

And bless thee with oblivion ! Were that vengeance ?  
 Me thou didst doom to hopeless life ; for this  
 Thy bride, thy sons, I slew, — th' expected throne  
 Snatched from thy eager grasp ! I see thee stand,  
 Like me, alone, and ask no other bliss !  
 " Call me a tigress, then, or, if thou wilt,  
 A Scylla, howling 'gainst the Tuscan shore ! "  
 For this I wrestled with my woman's heart ;  
 For this 'neath pangs Prometheus never knew  
 I writhed ! A rich requital from the gods  
 I reap in thy despair.

**JASON.**

Thy fiendish joy

Full soon must end.

**MEDEA.**

Hence, " and entomb thy bride " !

**JASON.**

Too well thou know'st the flames, meet instruments

Of hands like thine, have snatched from me that solace.  
Yet a more mournful task remains. " Yield me  
My sons, that I may mourn, and bury them."

MEDEA.

Never ! in death, as life, they 're mine !

JASON.

Think not

To rob me of their ashes.

MEDEA.

Beneath Acrea's outstretched arm they lie,  
And who shall snatch them thence ?

JASON.

Their father's hand !

The bleeding bodies of my slaughtered sons  
Thus do I snatch, despite —

MEDEA.

Forbear !

(Enter PRIESTESS of JUNO.)

PRIESTESS.

Forbear !

Nor dare insult the goddess ! At her feet  
The precious relics lie ! Dread to profane  
Her shrine ! Retire, rude man !

(Enter on one side CORINTHIANS ; LYCUS and IANTHE on the other.)

PRIESTESS.

Corinthians, back !

Respect this dome.

## CORINTHIANS.

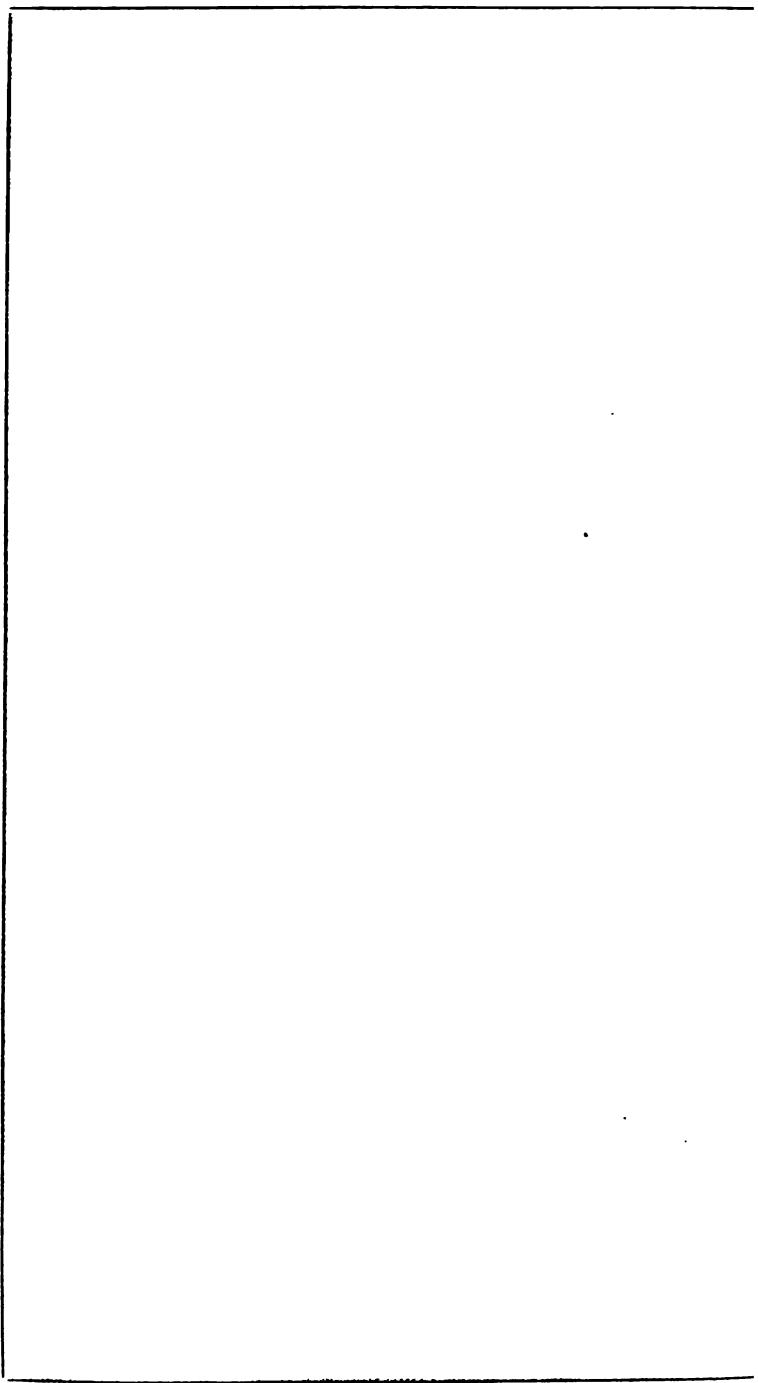
The goddess we revere,  
But for the murdereress, she is ours.

## MEDEA.

Away,  
Corinthian slaves ! To Fate, not you, I yield !  
[*Stabs herself.*]  
'T is done ! The blood, yet moist upon this steel,  
Mingles again with the warm fountain whence  
Its bright stream flowed ! — Ianthe, aid me near,  
Yet nearer, to the sons my struggling soul  
Burns to rejoin. Witness that as she lived  
Medea dies, — in tameless, glorious freedom, —  
Scorning, defying, mortal power ! For thee,  
Ungrateful friend, false father, perjured husband,  
My curse is on thee, — live !  
[*Dies.*]

**ERMINIA;**

**A TALE OF FLORENCE.**



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GUIDO BUONDELMONTI, . . . . . *A young Florentine Noble.*  
ROSSI, . . . . . *His Friend.*  
AMIDEI, . . . . . *An old Nobleman of Florence.*  
LAMBERTUCCIO AMIDEI, . . . . . *His Kinsman.*  
MOSCA LAMBERTI,  
STIATTA UBERTI,  
FIFANTI, } . . . . . *Allies and Kinsmen of the*  
MANELLI, } . . . . . *Amidei.*  
MALESPINI,  
ERMINIA, . . . . . *Daughter to Amidei.*  
LEONORA, . . . . . *Her Friend.*  
WIDOW DONATI.  
COSTANZA, . . . . . *Her Daughter.*  
LUCIA, . . . . . *Costanza's Attendant.*  
  
*Ladies and Gentlemen of Florence.*

SCENE. *Florence.*



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## E R M I N I A.

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### ACT I.

SCENE I. *A room in the Amidei palace. Enter ERMINIA  
and LEONORA.*

LEONORA.

Nay, nay, Erminia ! Avoid your guests  
On your betrothal eve ? The crowd, that wait  
To view the noblest youth and fairest maid  
All Florence boasts, will think you crazed. Come, come !

ERMINIA.

Dear Leonora, urge me not. My soul  
Receives no pleasure from the dazzling show  
Of vain respect ; my joy is all within.  
Ah, leave my heart the bliss to gaze awhile  
On its own happiness !

LEONORA.

You are too proud.

ERMINIA.

Say it be so, 't is my inheritance ;  
The gift of nature, not th' effect of art.  
I could not quell it, were 't to gain a crown.

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## LEONORA.

'There 's not another lady in all Florence,  
Whose heart would not beat quicker if this throng  
Assembled in her honor.

## ERMINIA.

She, whose heart,  
In the betrothal hour, throbs with delight  
At incense offered to her beauty's power,  
Save from her chosen knight, hath never loved !

## LEONORA.

I 'll talk no more, for here Count Guido comes.  
Now shall I see this stubborn mood of thine  
Yield to thy lover's smiles.

(Enter BUONDELMONTI.)

## BUONDELMONTI.

My Cytherea,  
What cruelty controls thee ? Round thy shrine  
Thy votaries throng, yet the capricious goddess  
Veils her joy-giving face. Thy hand, my fair !

## ERMINIA.

Thou, too, against me ?

## BUONDELMONTI.

'Gainst thee, love ? how so ?  
I would that she whom I adore should be  
The worshipped of all hearts.

## ERMINIA.

In very truth,  
I ask to be the worshipped of but one.

And true it is, that, woman as I am,  
I 'd rather face these knights in war array,  
Than meet their eyes fixed on me, when they deem  
I woo their flattering glance.

BUONDELMONTI.

Dost thou contemn  
The homage of thy friends ?

ERMINIA.

I thank their kindness, —  
For such 't is meant ; but the contempt reserve  
For my unworthy self, if I should feel  
A wish t' indulge the tempter, Vanity,  
Despite the better voice within my heart.

BUONDELMONTI.

Thou 'lt not refuse thy lover this, perchance  
The last request the *lover* e'er may make  
Thus low, my fair ; — for my sake give consent !

ERMINIA.

Who can refuse when Buondelmonti pleads ?

(*Exeunt BUONDELMONTI and ERMINIA.*)

LEONORA.

Who can refuse when Buondelmonti pleads ?  
Not his Erminia : proud as she is,  
Naught knows she of that graceful tyranny  
Which takes delight in straining to the utmost  
The bonds of love, then loosing them again  
Ere they are weakened. Yet she has more power,  
With her mild dignity, than other maids,

However charmingly capricious, hold.  
 Those whom she wins would be her slaves for life,  
 And think the leave to serve her were a boon  
 That kings might covet. Hark ! the voice of mirth  
 And music echoes through the halls. I 'll fly,  
 For one, at least, is watching for my step. [Exit.

## SCENE II.

*A hall in the palace.* Enter ERMINIA, BUONDELMONTI, AMIDEI,  
 L. AMIDEI, UBERTI, ROSSI, and others.

AMIDEI.

MAY these espousals prove a joyous prelude  
 To nuptials still more joyous ! While we thus  
 Make Love and Truth the columns of our state,  
 Florence, united in herself, shall stand  
 Unharmed amid the storm of war, whose wrath  
 O'erwhelms each neighbouring province.

L. AMIDEI.

Ay, our strength

Lies in our union ; let no reckless hand  
 Disturb this basis of our happiness ;  
 But may each Florentine, like our good host,  
 Confirm by wise and just alliances  
 The interests of the state.

AMIDEI.

Let music sound ;

Lead forth the dance, and let your mirth proclaim  
That Amidei's daughter is betrothed  
To Buondelmonti's lord ! Let Florence hear  
The joyful news, and know that, while her sons  
Maintain such concord, war may vainly strive  
To enter at her gates, which only discord  
Can e'er unbar ! Come, gentle cavaliers,  
Beseech your lovely dames to grace the dance.

[*The knights and ladies dance.*]

(Enter LEONORA.)

L. AMIDEI.

Fair Leonora, grant your hand, I pray !  
Fain would I rouse Uberti's jealousy.

LEONORA.

Gallant confession ! So you ask my favor,  
Not for my own sake, but to do despite  
Unto your friend ? Indeed, it were but just  
That every lady should reject your suit  
For your discourteousness, and let you stalk  
The phoenix of the evening.

L. AMIDEI.

Lady fair,

I will confess I dared not say how much  
I prized thy grace, lest he should hear the tale,  
And mar my suit.

LEONORA.

Thou hast so good a grace  
In mending a lame speech, I'll pardon thee !

## AMIDEI.

Now to the banquet, where the ruddy wine  
Shall wake your mirth anew, and each shall pledge  
His chosen fair.

(*Exeunt all but ERMINIA, BUONDELMONTI, and UBERTI.*)

## UBERTI.

Though Florence may rejoice,  
Yet many a heart within her walls is sad,  
And greets with sighs and tears this festive hour.

## ERMINIA.

Uberti jests ; or I have enemies  
Of whom I dreamed not.

## UBERTI.

Enemies, fair coz,  
You can have none : despairing lovers mourn  
That young Erminia's betrothals steal  
From their benighted hearts hope's last faint ray.

## BUONDELMONTI.

Speak you of lovers, sir ? Pray you, decide,  
Am I not prince in Florence, since I 've won  
Its greatest treasure ? Emperor and pope  
May wrangle for the devastated fields  
Of war-worn Italy ; not for their crowns  
Would I exchange this triumph ! What care I,  
That they with bloody laurels wreath their brows ?  
Be mine the myrtle crown, whose hue, Erminia,  
Is not more fadeless than my love for thee.

## UBERTI.

You may be styled, in her right, prince of Florence ;  
She rules its noblest hearts. Unhappily,  
'T is with a sway that scarce can be transferred ;  
For such allegiance as young knights bestow  
Is selfish, and demands return ; and he  
Who robs them of the price of their devoir  
They will esteem their tyrant. Good my lord,  
You will have deadly foes in Florence.

## BUONDELMONTI.

Ay ?

In such a cause I 'd singly face a thousand,  
And deem my life by far too poor a price  
For my Erminia's love. I pray you, sir,  
Are any of her desperate suitors here ?  
For I would know them. If I chance to fall  
In their good company I 'll fill my wine  
In the Venetian goblet, and my hand  
Shall rest upon my weapon's hilt, prepared  
To win my bride anew.

## UBERTI.

Mix with the guests,  
And each who views you with a frowning brow  
Note as your rival. But Erminia  
Can name each sighing cavalier ; doubt not  
Each victim is recorded in her heart.  
And she has scores of trophies, — broidered scarfs,  
Won in close field from many a hapless knight,

Laid by the victors at their tyrant's feet,  
To prove their claim to glory and to love.  
And she has moving lays from youths forlorn,  
More plaintive than the last-expiring chords  
Of Orpheus' lyre, which she, as barbarous  
As his tormentors, hears with cruel pleasure.

ERMINIA.

Good cousin, cease ; this is the veriest fooling —

UBERTI.

That e'er charmed maiden's ear ; runs it not so ?

ERMINIA.

That ever tortured maiden's ear. Uberti,  
Had I your poignant wit, I might describe  
A broidered scarf, worn next a young knight's heart ;  
Not won in battle-field, but cunningly  
Stolen from a lady's bower ; and I could tell  
Of a bright shield, whereon a dagger's point  
Has traced a name, which the unskilled might deem  
Contained some powerful spell, since the proud knight  
Doth gaze on it, and sigh, and quite forget  
To shake the buckler in his foeman's face.

UBERTI.

I cry you mercy, coz !

ERMINIA.

Nay, 't is too late ;  
You dared the combat. Shall I now reveal  
That name, that magic name —

UBERTI.

Beseech you, pardon

My forward tongue, and spare the mighty secret !

ERMINIA.

I will show mercy ; 't is the attribute  
Of my weak sex. Go, seek some other victim  
To sacrifice to the bright god of wit,  
Whom you essay to worship.

UBERTI.

Nay, the god  
Will find no offering on his shrine to-night ;  
He hath not deigned to aid his votary,  
But gives the victory to a woman's tongue.

ERMINIA.

O, be not humbled, cousin ; you will find  
Yours oft the case of those audacious ones  
Who enter in the lists of wordy war.  
Shall we not join the revellers ?

BUONDELMONTI.

We are  
Your captives, and must follow as you lead.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

*The chapel of the palace, dimly lighted. LAMBERTI discovered kneeling before the altar.*

LAMBERTI (*rising and coming forward*).

LET me no more insult the immortal throne  
With mortal anguish ! All in vain I seek,

Within this blest asylum of man's woes,  
To conquer such regrets as rack the hearts  
Of the condemned, who, from their drear abodes,  
Behold heaven's gates closed on them. Not a hope  
Illumines my despair. Which way I turn,  
All things increase my frenzy. Here, even here,  
The calm that doth pervade this hallowed dome  
Soothes not my grief; but recollection dire  
Adds tenfold fury to my pangs. These walls  
Have scarce yet ceased to echo to the steps  
Of the espousal train. Erminia's voice  
Seems still to linger here. At yonder shrine  
She knelt in happiness, while I, poor wretch,  
Far from the scene of splendor, hid my head,  
And called on death !

(Enter UBERTI.)

UBERTI.

Who calls on death? My friend!

LAMBERTI.

Go! What care I for friends? Away, I say!  
Why dost thou trespass on my privacy?

UBERTI.

Is 't not my privilege to share thy griefs?

LAMBERTI.

I would hold converse with my misery  
In solitude. The heart's most secret cells  
Brook only to be bared by Him who made them.  
I pray you importune me not. I am

At variance with myself, and scarce can have  
More patience with another.

UBERTI.

In this mood  
I will not leave you. Come, walk forth with me ;  
The chapel's gloom oppresses you.

LAMBERTI.

I would.  
That I could find some spot in all the earth,  
Where none would play the spy upon me !

UBERTI.

Faith !

Thou art possessed, for such discourteous bearing  
Belongs not to thy native mood ! Lamberti,  
Shake off this weakness ! Be again yourself !  
Brace on your armor, too long cast aside,  
Nor let your friends suspect you have renounced  
Your vows of chivalry. A belted knight  
Is the world's champion, and has no right  
To nurse love's fantasy while battle-shouts  
Ring o'er Italia's plains. Shall we not forth  
To-morrow, and rejoin the Emperor,  
Who 'll gladly welcome us ?

LAMBERTI.

Such was my purpose.

UBERTI.

Thanks to the saints for the first words of reason  
Thou 'st uttered for a month ! Lamberti lives  
For Fame again !

LAMBERTI.

Fame !

UBERTI.

Wherefore dost thou name it  
With such contempt ?

LAMBERTI.

It is not happiness !

UBERTI.

Time was you boasted Fame your bride.

LAMBERTI.

And still  
Is she my bride. With her I 'll dare my fate, —  
My hall the battle-field, my bridal song  
The groans of dire despair, whose horrid notes  
Will rise in due accordance with the joys  
That fill the bridegroom's breast.

(*Music faintly heard, as from a distance.*)

Ah ! not for me  
Those joyous strains. The trumpet-blast of death  
Shall soon announce my hymeneal feast !

UBERTI.

O noble heart, how sadly art thou crushed !  
But short time since, a silver clarion's voice  
Charmed with its glorious melody not more  
Than thy bold, equal tones ; but now, alas !  
All is discordant ; sorrow's careless touch  
Hath jarred the strings and spoiled the harmony. [*Aside.*  
Lamberti, rouse thee ! While we linger here

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Our laurels wither. They must taste again  
The smoke and blood of battle. Come, my friend,  
We are but recreant knights ; while thus we waste  
The golden moments, newer aspirants  
Will place their names o'er ours in Glory's list.  
To thee Italia turns, and cries, "O, why  
Doth young Lamberti shun the field of fame ? "

## LAMBERTI.

Uberti, cease ! Thy words annoy my ear,  
But make no impress on my o'er-wrought brain.  
Fame ! glory ! honor ! bawbles are ye all !  
Did I not seek them, as the plodding merchant  
Seeks wealth, that I might purchase happiness ?  
And hath she not escaped my eager grasp ?  
Go to the merchant, when the famine's breath  
Hath blighted the fair land, or pestilence  
Stalks through the losty city ; mock him, then,  
As with deep groans he mourns the impending doom,  
And say, " Look on thy gold, arise, be healed,  
For thou didst love and seek it !" Will he not  
Bid thee behold the death-stamp on his brow,  
And ask if gold be life ? Mock me not, friend ;  
The plague-spot is upon my heart ! Not all  
The homage of man's breath can cleanse the poison !  
And yet thou talk'st to me of fame, as if  
It were some talisman to charm away  
The heart's deep malady !

## UBERTI.

Each word I speak

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He doth convert to aliment for his woe.  
But, soft, here comes the author of this mischief.  
She cannot make it worse ; perchance her words  
May soothe Lamberti from this sullen mood.

(Enter ERMINIA.)

ERMINIA.

Uberti here ? I think 't is not your wont  
To fly the banquet. Ah, my cousin Mosca !  
You are a stranger, sir ; you did not grace  
Our festival to-night.

LAMBERTI.

Your pardon, lady ;  
I had a vow, — a penance to perform, —  
A weary vigil, which would not permit  
That I should be a reveller to-night.

ERMINIA.

Indeed ! Then Heaven forbid that I should seek  
To draw such faithful vot'ries from its service !  
And yet I think thou shouldst have paid thy vow  
Some day ere this ; thy duty thus to Heaven  
Had been discharged, nor would thy gallantry  
Have stood impeached. You blush ! Fie, fie,  
My gallant cousin, 't is not well in you  
To put such slight upon a lady's bidding.

LAMBERTI.

Lady, will you condemn me all unheard ?

ERMINIA.

Had it been told me that you would have proved

Neglectful of my wishes, I 'd have waged  
('T is well I did not !) on your courtesy  
This chaplet of white roses on my brow.

LAMBERTI.

One bud of it were far too rich a gage  
For my deserts.

ERMINIA.

You are my debtor, cousin,  
For this neglect, and must redeem your fame ;  
So, on my bridal eve, I charge you come  
And sue my pardon for to-day's offence.

LAMBERTI.

Lady —

ERMINIA.

Signor, denial will not pass.

LAMBERTI.

Erminia, take my life rather than force me  
To such refinement of my misery !

ERMINIA.

Lamberti, I had thought —

LAMBERTI.

Ay, you have thought  
That I was of the giddy, heartless crew,  
Who throng around you but to feast their eyes  
Upon your beauty's blaze ; whose deepest feeling  
Is that your cheek is fair, your eye is bright ;  
Whose very glance profanes your worth. — Alas !  
My tongue o'erleaps the barrier of my will !

It was my wish that you should deem me thus,  
 And so erase me from your memory.  
 Forgive me that I 've trespassed on your hearing !  
 For I had no intent t' intrude myself,  
 Darkening the sky of your bright festival  
 By my o'erclouded presence.

ERMINIA.

You are wrong  
 To term yourself intruder ; well you know  
 You are an ever-welcome guest ; my sire  
 Esteems you as a son, and I have held  
 You ever as a brother.

LAMBERTI.

Far too near  
 That title ; yet not dear enough.

ERMINIA.

I deemed  
 That you had shaken off that idle dream,  
 And turned again to thoughts more worthy of you.

LAMBERTI.

Would it were so ! — and yet I cannot wish  
 You were less worthy, or myself less true.  
 Erminia, to forget thee I must lose  
 Each nice perception of my heart and brain,  
 By which I know you loveliest of your sex, —  
 The rarest maid that ever virtue crowned.  
 True, I have dreamed ; the memory of that dream  
 Will haunt me while I live, — to madness haunt me !

When I behold you not, gloom overpowers me,  
And frenzy racks my soul. When you are near,  
I tremble and would fly, but am enchained  
By the most potent majesty of love.

## ERMINIA.

Lamberti, cease ! The words I would not list  
While I was yet mine own offend my ear,  
Vowed to transmit the homage of but one  
Unto my wedded heart. True, I am not  
As yet a wife, but the betrothal rites  
Precede but shortly that more sacred tie.  
Yet do not think I blame you ;— I 'm in fault,  
Since all unwittingly I forced your speech,  
When you had fain been silent.

## LAMBERTI.

Pardon, lady !

Thy sweet rebuke I justly have deserved.  
Yet my heart's will would close my lips for aye,  
Ere they should breathe a syllable to pain  
Thy modest ear. O, may you never know  
The pangs which you inflict ! Beseech you, now,  
Pronounce forgiveness for the last offence  
Lamberti will commit.

## ERMINIA.

Cousin, I pray you,  
Take not my words so gravely. Look on me  
As a fond sister, and the change will drive  
Uneasiness from both.

LAMBERTI.

When thou canst learn  
To school thine own heart as thou urgest me,—  
When, without murmuring, thou canst resign  
Count Guido to another, and canst teach  
Thy heart and lips to name him “brother,” then  
I can obey thee !

ERMINIA.

Ah ! his words strike deep !  
How weakly do I seek to turn his love  
By vain conceits, which could not change my own ! [Aside.  
Cousin, adieu ! I trust we 'll meet again  
In calmer moments.

LAMBERTI.

No, Erminia !  
This parting is our last ! Each time I sever  
From thy dear presence is repeated death.  
Why should I wilfully renew such pain ?

ERMINIA.

This is most sudden and unwelcome news ;  
I trust thou 'lt not desert fair Florence so !

LAMBERTI.

O, say no word of favor, lest my heart  
O'erleap the barrier resolution forms,  
Again offending thee with its vain plaint,  
Despite thy prohibition !

ERMINIA.

Fare thee well,

Good knight and true ; Heaven grant thee happiness !

LAMBERTI (*kneeling*).

Farewell, Erminia !

(*Exit ERMINIA.*)

Farewell to hope,

Farewell to joy ! — would 't were to life !

UBERTI.

Alas !

His passion knows no bounds, but in its fury  
Enchains a soul which, but for that one weakness,  
Has strength to rule a world. — Rouse thee, my friend ! —  
He heeds me not. — Lamberti, art thou mad ?  
Shake off this grief ! Trust me, Erminia  
Were a far better soldier ; she would pay  
Neglect like hers with scorn. Borrow some touch  
Of her proud spirit.

LAMBERTI.

Pray thee, cease thy words !

Woe relishes no converse save its own,  
And silence is its greatest comforter.  
Uberti, by our friendship, leave me now !  
I cannot brook that mortal eye should view  
My weakness and my woe. At morning's dawn  
We 'll meet. Good night.

UBERTI.

Even as you will ; good night.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *A street on the banks of the Arno.*

*Enter the Widow Donati and Rossi, meeting.*

WIDOW.

SIGNOR, well met.

ROSSI.

Your servant, noble lady.

WIDOW.

In sooth, my lord, I would your words of greeting  
Were more than courtesy.

ROSSI.

But honor me

With a command, you 'll find them so.

WIDOW.

I 'll test

Your friendship, sir. For many a tedious year  
In my ambitious breast has dwelt a plan,  
Unseen and unsuspected, yet not less  
The guide of all my actions. Through the day  
I slowly gathered power to force success ;  
At night my dreams were of the accomplishment

Of my design. Now are my means full ripe ;  
'T is time to act ; but yet I lack a friend  
To set my scheme in motion,

ROSSI.

I am yours  
For aught save treason 'gainst the state.

WIDOW.

O, fie,  
Suspicious mortal ! wherefore such a clause ?  
What ! Am I capable to stir such deeds  
As most of men would start from ? Am I one  
To o'erthrow governments and build anew  
Upon their ruins ?

ROSSI.

Lady, you are one  
Who, if you had the will, would find the power  
For aught that mortal e'er achieved.

WIDOW.

Go to !  
You are a flatterer ! — But truce ! My plot  
Is one of marriage.

ROSSI.

What ! remate yourself ?

WIDOW.

Not I ! Too long I 've borne authority,  
And queen'd it o'er my own domains, to shrink  
Into a secondary star, and hide  
My beams beneath a lord's imperious eye.  
My daughter is the party.

ROSSI.

Daughter, say you ?

You must mistake ; rather your younger sister.

WIDOW.

If you will be true friend to my design,  
Prithee cease fooling ; I 'm not in the mood.

ROSSI.

I will be grave as is his Holiness  
When Germany looks fierce. Declare your will.

WIDOW.

Hark ! hark ! What melting sounds make glad the air  
That sweeps from Arno's breast ?

(*A long train of barges gayly decorated, containing ERMINIA, BUON-DELMONTI, LEONORA, AMIDEI, UBERTI, and others, appears upon the river.*)

ROSSI.

The strain proceeds

From yonder train of boats.

WIDOW.

A gallant show,  
Worthy our gallant city ! Pray you, sir,  
What glad event do they thus celebrate ?

ROSSI.

Lady, you see the friends and followers  
Of Buondelmonti's house, and also those  
Of Amidei's blood. But the last night  
The fair Erminia, Amidei's child,  
To the young Buondelmonti was betrothed.

WIDOW.

Now Heaven forbid that thy lips utter truth !  
No raven's voice with more unwelcome note  
E'er croaked of death !

ROSSI.

Why should it anger you ?

WIDOW.

Fool that I am ! It is the overthrow  
Of my so cherished scheme. 'T was to this end  
I did entreat thy friendship.

ROSSI.

To what end ?

Thy passion soars so high it cannot stoop  
To explain this sudden fire.

WIDOW.

Out on thy dulness,  
That cannot guess what I forget to speak  
Betwixt surprise and wrath ! It is this lord  
To whom I 'd give my daughter.

ROSSI.

'T is too late.

WIDOW.

Thou shalt not say or think so ! While I live,  
And time moves on, "too late" shall not exist !  
I 'll blot those words, "too late," "impossible,"  
Out of my language. Whoso utters them  
Before my presence I 'll esteem my foe !

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ROSSI.

Well, lady, I am promised to your service ;  
What shall be done, and how ?

WIDOW.

O vile delay,

How hast thou punished me ! 'T is ever thus  
With those who sport with Time. He doth avenge  
Full dearly insult to his majesty.

Rossi, since first my daughter saw the light,  
I have resolved to raise my house's fortunes  
By wedding her with Buondelmonti's heir.  
She hath been trained and tutored for his rank.  
Such beauty, grace, and rare accomplishments ! —  
Smile if you will ; no mother's vanity  
Dictates my boast. Thou shalt behold, and own  
My judgment cool. Describe Erminia.

ROSSI.

Have you not heard report of her ?

WIDOW.

I have ;

But Rumor's hundred tongues as much exceed  
The simple truth, as hundreds one.

ROSSI.

Not here.

Walk on with me towards the river's brink,  
And scan her features as she leaves the barge ;  
Then wilt thou see the fairest of her sex  
Since Helen ruined Troy.

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WIDOW.

I 'll follow you ;  
Then lead you to my house, where you 'll confess,  
That as immortal Venus outshone Helen,  
So far Costanza's beauty dims Erminia's.

SCENE II.

*A room in the Widow Donati's house. COSTANZA seated.*

LUCIA attiring her.

COSTANZA.

THY hands are slow to-day, or else I lack  
My wonted patience, Lucia. Now the mirror.  
Fie on thee, girl, what spirit of awkwardness  
Is in thy fingers ? O, these curls are stiff  
As thou hadst meant them to perpetuate  
Thy skill for ever ! If my glass is true,  
No village maid upon her bridal day,  
Fearful to move lest she should disarrange  
Her wondrous finery, looks more prim than I.

[Pulls the ornaments from her hair, and shakes  
the curls over her neck and shoulders.

Here goes your labor ! Now my tiring 's done.  
Lucia, thou 'st been abroad ; give me the news.

LUCIA.

Lady, there 's naught so new as thine own whims ;  
Each minute brings a fresh one.

COSTANZA.

Thank thy stars

That thou art spared the tediousness of old ones !

LUCIA.

That 's my sole comfort, — the variety  
Of your caprice. Did you not change so oft,  
I should expire of weariness.

COSTANZA.

Alas !

If I had not such whims, into what channel  
Wouldst thou disperse the current of thy spleen ?

LUCIA.

Perchance upon your mother.

COSTANZA.

Why on her ?

LUCIA.

Because she so o'erloads the packhorse, patience,  
With lecturing on thy beauty and thy grace.

COSTANZA.

Is this the news ?

LUCIA.

Ah, no ! 't is old as thou art.

But there is news abroad thou 'lt joy to hear.  
Last night the young Erminia was betrothed  
To Guido, heir of Buondelmonti's house.

COSTANZA.

Lucia, can this be true ?

LUCIA.

Lady, e'en so.

COSTANZA.

Perish Lamberti's love, and from its tomb  
My hopes shall soar ! Say, heardst thou aught of him ?

LUCIA.

'T is said Lamberti has resolved to join  
St. John's bold champions.

COSTANZA.

Say no more, my girl.

O, I am sick at heart that I have given  
My love unto a knight, who foolishly  
Hath chased the shadow that still fled his grasp,  
And scorned the treasure that he might have won !  
I am revenged, in that Erminia  
Slights him as he slights me.

LUCIA.

Ah ! love is blind,  
Or he would see how much Costanza's charms  
Exceed Erminia's.

COSTANZA.

Yet she is fair.

LUCIA.

She 'd seem but common, place her by your side.

COSTANZA.

She is too tall, yet she hath majesty.

LUCIA.

You have most grace, so you need not be rivals,  
Differing so much.

COSTANZA.

Ay, true. Should a sylph seek  
To emulate Diana, or Diana  
Pine to exchange her huntress mien, to wear  
The sylph's unfettered motion ? Yet I would  
I knew the charm by which she won her cousin !

LUCIA.

They grew beneath the selfsame roof.

COSTANZA.

Even so.

If that 's a reason for his love to her,  
She should love him.

LUCIA.

Had ever love a reason ?

COSTANZA.

Ay, girl, my love for him.

LUCIA.

Is 't possible ?

I should not have divined it.

COSTANZA.

Say'st thou so ?

I love him that he hath the noblest bearing  
Of any knight in Florence ; then his fame  
In knightly deeds might win a lady's heart ;  
And, lastly, I would pierce his stubborn breast,  
Because it is so stubborn 'gainst my smiles,  
And that the maid who wins Lambertii's hand  
Will wring the hearts of half her sex in Florence.

LUCIA.

Three reasons ; but the last most apt of all !

COSTANZA.

I see not how Erminia should control  
Lamberti's heart so strongly, for she seems  
Indifferent of conquest. Now I think  
That, with more cunning, I can wider spread  
Beauty's dominion ; for I can command  
Every gallant by his own vanity ;  
For each one thinks it is for him I sigh,  
And each one is persuaded, past all doubt,  
That he is knighthood's mirror, and his worth  
Dimming each rival's fame. I would so rule,  
That for each smile I could command a life.

LUCIA.

O grasping vanity ! how many ways  
Thou seek'st for thy indulgence !

[*Aside.*]

COSTANZA.

See who comes.

LUCIA.

Thy mother, and a stranger by her side.

COSTANZA.

Perchance I 'll now hear more of this betrothal.  
The sound is music to my ear.

(*Enter Widow and Rossi.*)

WIDOW.

My lord,

This is my daughter whom I named to you.

Costanza, Signor Rossi is a friend  
Whom you must favor.

COSTANZA.

Sir, I am well pleased  
To bid you welcome.

ROSSI.

Lady, I am happy  
That I am thus permitted to behold  
The gem of Florence.

COSTANZA.

You are courtly, sir.  
Dear mother, what news bring you from abroad ?

WIDOW.

You shall know by and by. Perchance I 'll tell  
What will not discontent you. Stand aside,  
While I hold conference with this gentleman.

[COSTANZA and LUCIA retire.

What think you further of the plan I named ? [To Rossi.

ROSSI.

The Count is yours.

WIDOW.

Does not Erminia wane  
Beneath this sun of beauty ?

ROSSI.

I will speak  
With honesty. To me, Erminia  
Is far more lovely ; but my friend, the Count,  
Is giddy, fickle, and one winning glance

From yonder maid will bring him to her feet,  
Enslaved as Hercules to Lydia's queen,  
Or Antony to Egypt's. Novelty  
Is his divinity, and vanity  
Doth more than love control his bridal choice.  
It is his boast, that Buondelmonti's wife  
Shall be the empress of Italia's fair.  
There is no point, no shadow of resemblance  
Between your daughter and Erminia ;  
Neither would suffer by comparison  
With her fair rival ; but the novelty  
Of young Costanza's beauty will enchain  
Count Guido's roving eye.

WIDOW.

'T is now your part  
To lure him hither.

ROSSI.

That shall soon be done.

Hath she the wit to bear this scheming out ?  
Trust me, 't is not her face alone can bind  
Our whimsical gallant. If her sweet voice  
Discourse not in such sort to enchant his ear,  
His eyes will speedily throw off their bondage.  
Say, hath she art ?

WIDOW.

A true Italian brain.

ROSSI.

She shares your secret ?

WIDOW.

O, content you, sir !

I 'm not so mere a woman. She is free  
Who knows not how she 's ruled. Nature 's perverse,  
Prone to rebellion since the days of Eve.  
I prompt ambition and forbid not love ;  
So hath she not th' original temptation  
And spur to disobedience.

ROSSI.

But 't is time . . .

She were prepared to second your design.

WIDOW.

Daughter, approach. Think'st thou a coronet  
Would grace those flowing locks ?

COSTANZA.

Mother, I would

The question were less idle.

WIDOW.

Say'st thou so ?

Would not thy head ache 'neath such weight of honor ?

COSTANZA.

And if it did, the pain were far more welcome  
Than any pleasure. But why trifle thus ?

WIDOW.

Obey me, and the coronet is thine.

COSTANZA.

And by what means ?

WIDOW.

Marriage. Do you consent ?

COSTANZA.

Not till I see the noble from whose hand  
The gift shall come.

WIDOW.

Count Guido Buondelmonti.

COSTANZA.

Mother, you mock me, or your brain is turned !  
He to an Amidei is betrothed.

WIDOW.

The tie shall be dissolved.

COSTANZA.

This passes patience !

WIDOW.

Be calmer, dear. This gentleman doth vouch  
That young Count Guido can be won by thee.

COSTANZA.

The gentleman is over-generous !  
My grateful heart doth lack the wit to frame  
An answer suited to his courtesy,  
In thus bestowing on my humble self  
The fair Erminia's lover ! Much I fear  
The lady and the Count are ignorant  
Of their rich luck in such a faithful friend.

ROSSI.

The lady hath a tongue !

[*Aside.*

WIDOW.

Costanza, cease !

Say, if I bring the coronet to your feet,  
Will you accept it ?

COSTANZA.

Ay ; I would it were  
Th' imperial crown ; it is the richer gift ;  
Pray you, let it be that !

WIDOW.

Well, infidel,  
Be thou attired as best may suit the rank  
To which I will advance thee.

COSTANZA.

Would I dared  
To swear, that till I see the coronet  
No other ornament shall grace my head !

WIDOW.

Rossi, we will retire, and further plan  
To benefit this unbelieving girl.  
Costanza, get thee gone, and deck thyself  
As I commanded. I will tell thee more  
When I return.

[*Exeunt WIDOW and Rossi*]

COSTANZA.

Well, Lucia, lend thy wit,  
And aid me to expound this riddle.

LUCIA.

I ?

I am bewildered ! But it seems some plan  
Has risen in your mother's restless brain,  
To wed you to this Count.

COSTANZA.

I have long known

---

That what she wills she 'll do ; yet her last words  
Seem so absurd, that, but I know her wit  
Is seldom at default, I much should fear  
She were distraught.

LUCIA.

Wilt thou be ruled by her  
If she has reason in her strange commands ?

COSTANZA.

I will. Who would not be obedient  
At such a price ? — to wear a coronet !  
O, in my dreams I 've worn a jewelled crown !  
But I 'll content me with the coronet.

LUCIA.

Imperial dreamer ! thy dread majesty  
Already hath forgot the one loved knight !

COSTANZA.

No more of him ! I now shall be revenged  
Upon all sides. Lambertī slighted me  
For fair Erminia's love, and she in turn  
Revenged my slight by loving Buondelmonti.  
Now, if I win her lover, I shall be  
Dearly revenged on her, who caused Lambertī  
To scorn the heart he knew he could have gained.

LUCIA.

And this will cure your love ?

COSTANZA.

Harp not on that !

I think the golden circlet's blaze in time  
Will quite consume it.

LUCIA.

I have heard it said  
Erminia loved this lord.

COSTANZA.

I loved Lamberti,  
But yet she kept him prisoner.

LUCIA.

'T was his fault,  
But sure not hers, since she would none of him.

COSTANZA.

If I gain Buondelmonti, she may wed  
Lamberti to revenge herself on me.

LUCIA.

Heaven grant no worse revenge may come than that !  
Methinks 't is ominous, that the word "revenge"  
Falls from your lips so oft.

COSTANZA.

Prate not of omens,  
But follow me. I will array myself  
As my shrewd mother wished, and wait the end.

[Exit COSTANZA

LUCIA.

That ever Cupid should beguile thee thus,  
And, in his malice, lure thee to believe  
Thou couldst love any save thy own sweet self !  
In faith, Lamberti is far happier

Mourning Erminia's indifference,  
Than to love thee and be beloved in turn.  
But for this Count, if he can prove so faithless  
As to forsake his fair betrothed for thee,  
Why, he deserves thee ; so saints grant him patience !  
Who weds Costanza will have need of it ! [Exit.]

## SCENE III.

*A street in Florence. Enter BUONDELMONTI and Rossi.*

BUONDELMONTI.

WHY didst thou shun our mirth to-day ?

ROSSI.

My lord,

As I was hastening to the river's brink  
I met a friend, a lady. We conversed  
Of you and your Erminia. At that time  
Your brilliant train passed by, and she besought  
I would escort her to the water's edge,  
That she might view the maid, our city's boast.  
Could I refuse her ?

BUONDELMONTI.

No. What said the dame ?

ROSSI.

She said what, uttered by a cavalier,  
And thus repeated, would bring on a combat.  
She vowed she had a daughter fairer far

Than fair Erminia, and thereupon  
Did urge me to her dwelling, that my eyes  
Might judge if she spoke truth ; and thus it is  
That I have been a truant.

BUONDELMONTI.

Who is she  
Who robbed me of my friend.

ROSSI.

She is the widow  
Of a Donati.

BUONDELMONTI.

Ay ? I know her well ;  
A cunning dame ; I warrant me she spread  
This snare to win a husband for the maid.  
How say you, friend, will you too wed ?

ROSSI.

My lord,  
The maid is not for me ; she is designed  
For one far higher.

BUONDELMONTI.

Who 's the happy man  
That shall possess her ?

ROSSI.

That I cannot tell.  
But he should be as great as Jupiter,  
And have the world within his glance and grasp,  
If he would ask a fairer bride.

BUONDELMONTI.

Ah, ha !

She cannot rival mine. Rossi, you smile,  
As if I were too boastful. By the gods,  
I 'll see the lady and confound your judgment,  
Which to a sun compares a satellite !  
Come, you shall guide me.

ROSSI.

Faith, not I, my lord !

BUONDELMONTI.

Deny so slight a favor to a friend ?

ROSSI.

Shall I encounter fair Erminia's frowns ?  
Give up this whim, my lord ; I was too thoughtless,  
Knowing your giddy humor, in repeating  
The morn's adventure. Let us to the palace,  
And woo Erminia's sunny glance. In faith,  
She 'll scarce smile on you if you play the truant  
Upon this day.

BUONDELMONTI.

Nay, I 'm not yet enslaved,  
And shall make free to borrow so much time  
As may suffice for me to view this maid ;  
For, from your backwardness, I much suspect  
That you have left your heart in her sweet keeping.  
Say, will you go ?

ROSSI.

Indeed, my lord, not I.

BUONDELMONTI.

Well, I will plead your cause.

ROSSI.

Give o'er this whim.

BUONDELMONTI.

Fie, Rossi ! jealousy but ill becomes thee.  
What ! play the dragon of the Hesperian garden  
Ere yet the fruit is yours ? I am resolved  
To view this treasured beauty ; so adieu. [Exit.]

ROSSI.

You have well proved your right descent from Eve !  
But I, who play the serpent and present  
This fair temptation to your view, may fail  
To win the paradise from which I lure you.  
And yet, Erminia, you will be free,  
And may again be won ; so with that hope  
I must content myself, till time shall show  
If Guido's fickle heart be wrought upon  
According to our scheme. I 'll after him,  
Lest some unthought-of hindrance should occur  
To mar the widow's wishes and my own. [Exit.]

#### SCENE IV.

*A room in the Widow Donati's house. Enter the Widow  
and BUONDELMONTI.*

WIDOW.

My lord, this pleasure 's great as unexpected ;  
Your presence honors me.

BUONDELMONTI.

The honor 's mine,  
In paying duty to you, noble lady.

WIDOW.

I should congratulate the gallant Count  
That he has won our city's fairest maid  
To share his rank ; although I must lament  
That my own hopes are blighted. I had dared  
To think my daughter might become the place  
Which Buondelmonti's dame must hold, and thus  
(Ah, vainly !) I reserved her hand for you.  
Let me present her, that your eyes may judge  
If I but dreamed her charms deserved your notice.

[*Exit Wmow.*

(*Enter Rossi.*)

ROSSI.

Guido, fly ! O, fly !  
Fall not into a snare so palpable !  
Thou seest the dragon of th' Hesperian garden  
Gapes to devour thee !

BUONDELMONTI.

But the memory  
Of my Erminia's charms will prove an ægis  
To ward off this attack.

ROSSI.

Best not to prove  
The strength of thy so-boasted shield too far !  
Costanza comes. Rash knight, now close thine eyes,  
Or yield thee prisoner, rescue or no rescue !

(Enter WIDOW and COSTANZA.)

WIDOW.

Behold the maid whom I reserved for you.

BUONDELMONTI.

Have I been cursed with madness, that I deemed  
I had seen beauty ere I saw Costanza ?  
Thus shone the Paphian goddess when fierce Mars  
Owned the keen shaft of her mischievous boy !  
Since you have deemed me worthy of her hand, [To Wido]  
I should be most ungrateful to decline  
What royalty might covet.

ROSSI.

So ! 't is done !

Unto what saint shall I erect a shrine  
For this achievement ?

[Asia]

BUONDELMONTI.

To Costanza. Goddess (for I dare not  
To call thee less, and cannot call thee more),  
Thy mother hath bestowed thee on a mortal,  
Who prays thee to confirm the precious gift !

COSTANZA.

Must I descend from my divinity  
To be a mortal's bride ?

BUONDELMONTI.

Diana shunned

The gods, yet smiled upon Endymion ;  
And thy great prototype, bright Venus, loved  
To glide from high Olympus, and to rove

With young Adonis upon earth. Wilt thou  
Affect more state than they ?

COSTANZA.

Ah, no, my lord !  
Conquered like them, like them I yield my heart,  
Trembling lest you should scorn so quick a triumph.

BUONDELMONTI.

Venus, thou art propitious ! Love, thy lips  
Must seal the bond for thy heart's truth.

ROSSI (*as if going*).

My friend,

What message have you for the Amidei ?

BUONDELMONTI.

Stay, Rossi, stay ! I need thy cunning brain.  
If ever thou hast loved me, aid me straight,  
By moving heaven and earth, to win the Pope  
To grant a dispensation from the rite  
Which I too hastily embraced !

ROSSI.

The spell  
Works wondrously ! (*Aside.*) Guido, my will is yours.  
But I must have more close instructions ere  
I stir in an affair so grave.

BUONDELMONTI.

So grave !

Talk I of murder, Rossi ?

ROSSI.

Ay, of that

Which may lead to it ! (Aside.) Briefly, this affair  
Involves two parties ; Amidei stands  
On one side, setting forth his daughter's wrong ;  
I, on the other, pleading for remission  
Of Buondelmonti's contract. How think you  
His Holiness decides ?

BUONDELMONTI.

I have no thought  
For aught beyond my bright enchantress here.  
Do as you will ! — Let my petition reach  
The Papal throne ere Amidei's plaint.  
Say that my house is far more powerful,  
More wealthy far, than any house in Florence,  
And that we ever have confessed his claim  
To Italy's dominion. Love forefend !  
Methinks I 'm growing politic ! O, haste !  
Block up all avenues to his Holiness,  
Until my suit is won ! Spare not for gold !

ROSSI.

With all the haste I can, still Amidei  
May reach the Papal throne in time to mar  
His Holiness' consent ; unless 't is gained  
Before the injured represent their cause,  
I fear that you will be compelled to make  
Your contract good.

BUONDELMONTI.

Prometheus' fate be mine,  
If I swerve from my homage to this maid !

---

Nor pope nor emperor shall bar my will !  
This hour I 'll wed, — then humbly sue the Church  
To grant forgiveness. Haste, my fairest love,  
T' assure thy subject's happiness.

COSTANZA.

My lord,  
I 'm yours.

BUONDELMONTI.

My heart's great empress ! What devotion  
Can I bestow, to thank thy swift compliance  
With my rude eagerness to call thee mine ?  
Fortune may store for me some woman's caprice,  
And snatch away this brightest of her smiles  
With the same haste she gave it. In that fear,  
I will not quit this hand till it is mine  
Beyond recall ; nor will I take mine eyes  
From thy fair brow, until my coronet  
Confine those flowing locks which, in rich freedom,  
Stray o'er thy graceful neck, and enviously  
Strive to conceal its beauty.

COSTANZA.

Ah, my lord,  
How dare I hope this mood will last ?

BUONDELMONTI.

My life  
Must vanish ere I cease to adore thy charms !  
Dare I ask equal love from thee ?

COSTANZA.

My life

Must vanish ere I cease to adore — thy rank !      [Aside.]

BUONDELMONTI.

Sweet echo ! Wiser than Narcissus was,  
I eagerly embrace the matchless treasure.  
Thou 'rt robed as would become even royalty  
Upon the bridal day ; there 's no delay  
Need interpose between us and the altar.

WIDOW.

You 're right ; the bridal must not be postponed,  
Lest some untimely interruption hap.  
So let us to the chapel, where with speed  
The marriage shall proceed, whose sacred bond  
Cannot be lightly shaken off. This way !

[Exeunt.]

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *A street in Florence. Enter Rossi.*

ROSSI.

So he is wedded, and cannot retract,  
And fair Erminia 's free ! Now, my next step  
Requires more wit,—more caution, delicacy.  
Shall I haste to the lady, and inform  
Of Buondelmonti's treason ? Much I fear  
She 'll hate the bearer for the tidings' sake.  
I will so manage to be in her presence  
When the ungrateful news first meets her ear,  
Then, feigning ignorance, I will espouse  
The lady's cause, and in most gallant rage  
Threaten to pour forth Buondelmonti's blood.  
Yet, if she love him, she will scarce feel favor  
To one who aims at his dear life ; but since  
'T will be for her sake, woman's vanity  
Will plead my pardon. O, beshrew my wit !  
I am in love, which makes me cowardly,  
Fearing to fix my choice on any course,  
Lest all my hopes should fall there. I must rest

On something ere the storm bursts forth, lest I  
Should be esteemed a favorer of this bridal,  
And excommunicated from the presence  
Of her, for whom alone I 've ta'en the pains  
To aid the deep, intriguing Dame Donati  
In her unmatched essay. I 'll to the palace,  
And then, inspired by fair Erminia's eyes,  
Determine on my future course, and hope  
Shall make me bold in my nice enterprise.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE. II.

*An apartment in the Amidei palace. Enter LAMBERTI and UBERTI.*

UBERTI.

WHAT means this heavy cloud upon thy brow ?  
Why are thine eyes, but late cast down with grief,  
Now lighted up with such a sullen glare  
As marks Vesuvius' gathering wrath ?

LAMBERTI.

My friend,

Dishonor rests upon us. Buondelmonti —

UBERTI.

Ha ! What of him ? What hast thou done ?

LAMBERTI.

My shame

Is that I have not done as you suspect.

Uberti, know that the false Count is wedded, —

Wedded within the hour to a Donati !  
Flung to the winds are all the lover's vows,  
The sacred rites profaned, and that high heart,  
Which knew no weakness save in loving him,  
Is trampled on, and treated with such scorn  
As a barbarian Turk might cast upon  
One of his hundred fawning slaves ! O Heaven !

UBERTI.

And lives he still ?

LAMBERTI.

He lives, and dreams, perchance,  
Our hearts, like his, are callous to the claims  
Of loud-voiced honor ! O Erminia !  
Who shall repeat the story of thy wrongs,  
And wake thine ear to misery's chilling voice ?

UBERTI.

Her woe doth more unman you than your own.

LAMBERTI.

Methinks some fiend lurks round me, dear Uberti.  
The thought of her distress distracts me ; yet  
I dare not search my heart, lest I should find  
More joy at his unworthiness, than grief  
For her who suffers by it. Down, base thoughts !  
Ye are unworthy of me ! Counsel me,  
How shall we break this unexampled act  
To poor Erminia ? Who will undertake  
So hard a task ?

UBERTI.

Her father ?

LAMBERTI.

Most unfit !

He will more rave at th' insult to his house  
Than at his daughter's grief. My dear Uberti,  
You are a friend and kinsman ; let this task  
Devolve on you.

UBERTI.

No, no ! I am unfit  
To be misfortune's herald. My wild mood  
Erminia knows, and she will surely deem  
I seek to put a cruel jest upon her.

LAMBERTI.

Perhaps young Leonora would consent  
T' inform her friend.

UBERTI.

She has not so much courage  
As to inform Erminia if false Guido  
Had wounded his least finger. Ah, Lamberti !  
This must be your part.

LAMBERTI.

'T is impossible !

O, how degrading would it seem for me,  
A slighted lover, to be first to sound  
My favored rival's great unworthiness !  
Erminia comes, and with a glance so free  
From every shade of care, that 't were as well  
To scatter pestilence on the pure air,  
And turn that first of blessings to a curse,

As to invade her peaceful, happy heart  
With news which must so harshly blight its joys.

(Enter ERMINIA, LEONORA, AMIDEI, and ROSSI.)

By Heaven ! Count Guido's shadow, Rossi, here !  
O impudence unparalleled ! [Aside to UBERTI.]

ERMINIA (to LAMBERTI and UBERTI).

My friends,

You 're ever welcome ! Most so when surprise  
Enhances pleasure. I supposed ere this  
You 'd left fair Florence far behind.

UBERTI.

Lady,

Such was our purpose ; unforeseen events  
Make us again your guests.

ERMINIA.

Methinks you 're grave.

My Leonora, have you frowned on him ?

AMIDEI.

Perhaps he has deserved the lady's frowns,  
And looks thus grave from the rebuke of conscience.

UBERTI.

Granting my own unworthiness, I still  
Must wish each knight, who woos a lady's favor,  
Were constant as myself. Fair Leonora,  
Grant me a moment's audience.

[LEONORA and UBERTI converse aside.

AMIDEI (to Rossi).

Signor,

Pray, when may we expect the noble Count ?

ROSSI.

Would I could answer you ! We parted last  
Some two hours since, and then I urged him much  
To hasten here with me ; but he replied,  
He must make bold to borrow so much time  
From his Erminia as would suffice  
To visit a fair lady, of whose charms  
A loud report had reached him.

ERMINIA.

Say you so ?

Ah ! Signor Rossi, in your glance I read  
That you would gladly rouse my jealousy.  
You 'll find my vanity impregnable ;  
I 'll even dare inquire the lady's name,  
Who interferes with my prerogative  
Of seeming fair in Buondelmonti's eyes.

ROSSI.

She 's called Costanza, of Donati's house.

LAMBERTI.

Can I bear this ! — Thou parasite of him,  
Whom in this presence I forbear to style  
As he deserves, how darest thou linger here,  
Torturing this lady's ear with thy vile taunts ?  
Begone, if thou wouldest live !

ROSSI.

Ha ! dost thou threat ?

Come on ! I am as well inclined as thou. [Draws.

## ERMINIA.

Lamberti, are you crazed ?

LAMBERTI (*to Rossi*).

Vile tool, begone !

I cross not swords save with the principal  
In this foul deed !

AMIDEI (*to Lamberti*).

Why, nephew, is this well ?

The honor due to me should save my guests  
From open insult.

LAMBERTI.

O, your pardon, sir !

Command that reptile forth, and I will show  
The reasons of my actions.

AMIDEI.

Sure you 're mad !

LAMBERTI.

For your sake, sir, I would that I were mad,  
And that the motives for my violence  
Were but the monsters of a heated brain.  
When he goes forth, I speak.

AMIDEI (*to Rossi*).

Forgive me, sir,

That, in accordance with my nephew's wish,  
I pray your absence. This so rude request  
Impute not to inhospitality,  
But my anxiety to understand  
How far this matter doth concern me.

ROSSI.

Sir,  
I am your servant. Lady, let me hope  
Some future day to justify myself.  
For you, the time will come —

[To LAMBERTI.]

LAMBERTI.

To punish thee !

[Exit Rossi.]

AMIDEI.

Nephew, explain to us your ill-timed frenzy.

LAMBERTI.

Uberti, aid me ! Leonora, you  
Can give my reasons utterance. —

(They decline by gesture.)

No help ?

ERMINIA.

Ah, Leonora, do you weep ? Speak, speak  
This mystery ! Why do you hesitate,  
And gaze on me with such embarrassed eyes ?

LAMBERTI.

And must I be th' unwilling instrument  
To strike Erminia's heart ? Then nerve thyself  
As if I were thine executioner !  
This day th' indissoluble marriage-bond  
Has joined Count Guido to the fair Costanza,  
Whom Rossi named.

ERMINIA (after a pause).

Must I believe the shaft

Of woe can have been winged by Guido's hand ?

AMIDEI.

Lamberti, as you are the soul of honor,  
I cannot doubt. Say on.

LAMBERTI.

The tale, my lord,  
Was told me by the priest that wedded them ;  
A holy man, who shrank with grief and horror  
When I declared the former rites. From him  
I learned that Rossi was an instrument  
In this foul treachery.

AMIDEI.

So this stripling dares  
To trifle with the honor of my house !  
'T were safer far to pluck the lion's mane !  
Give me my armor ! — I've not borne its weight  
For many a year, but now I 'll brace it on,  
And wield again my sword, and show this boy  
That the right arm which, for full fifty years,  
Hath served the state can yet maintain my honor !

[Attempts to draw his sword, but fails.]

O, I am old ! my wrath is impotent !  
But since my own strength fails t' avenge my wrongs,  
All Florence shall arise in my behalf !  
What ! sue for an alliance with my house !  
To be betrothed, then wed with another !  
If to the basest clown the city owns  
He had shown such foul scorn, such shameless breach

Of honor's laws, he should be hooted forth  
From knighthood's pale ; but since on me, on me,  
This outrage vile hath fallen, what shall atone,  
What cleanse my tarnished honor, save his blood !

ERMINIA.

O !

AMIDEI.

Girl ! dost thou lament ? Aid me to curse  
The man, who dares to make thee such a mark  
For the keen shaft of pity and of scorn !

ERMINIA.

In mercy lead him hence !

UBERTI.

Signor, I pray you,  
Retire with me. We will consult apart  
At leisure on this business.

AMIDEI.

O, Uberti,  
This is a fearful stroke !

[*Exit, supported by UBERTI.*

LEONORA.

Her stern, fixed gaze affrights me ! O, Erminia,  
Gaze not on me with such unearthly eyes !  
I cannot stay ! Say, shall I call her women ?

LAMBERTI.

No ! let no menials witness this distress,  
It is too sacred for their careless gaze.

LEONORA.

Such misery is infectious ; let me summon  
Other attendance.

ERMINIA.

No ! no other eyes  
Must view my agony.

[*Exit* LEONORA.]

LAMBERTI.

Erminia !

ERMINIA.

What would Lamberti ?

LAMBERTI.

Pardon, dearest lady,  
If I have seemed too forward in inflicting  
This wound upon thy peace !

ERMINIA.

I blame thee not ;  
But, from the weapon that achieved the blow,  
Look to the hand that guided it ! O Heaven ! —  
How rudely am I roused from happy dreams ! —  
Too happy to be true ! O, I have raised  
An altar of idolatry to one  
Who proves mere mortal, and am justly punished  
In my false god's desertion ! But the fire  
Of Italy's best days is in my breast ;  
I 'll dare as Rome's proud daughters might have dared !  
Lamberti, as I silent stood, benumbed  
By misery's rude shock, dark visions rose

In my o'ertortured brain !

(*Lamberti kneels and presents his sword.*)

Ay, even so !

LAMBERTI.

Lady, I am thy slave !

ERMINIA.

O, be my friend,

If I may hope for truth or friendship more !

LAMBERTI.

Believe that truth and friendship dwell in me !

Erminia, I will serve thee as I serve

My patron saint ! I swear by all my hopes

Hereafter —

ERMINIA.

Cease ! Even thus false Guido swore !

But Heaven records the perjury ! As he

Dared call its sacred witness to his words,

So will it witness them to his o'erthow !

LAMBERTI.

Heaven's strength is in my arm t' avenge thy wrong !

ERMINIA.

But an hour since I was a very woman ;

I never dreamed misfortune could reach me ;

Love reigned within my untried heart, and life,

Swept by his wing, seemed an unfading spring.

The scene is changed. Young Love has fled away ;

His smiling eyes no longer light my soul ;

But anger, shame, and fierce revenge now dwell

Where he abode. O faithless Buondelmonti !  
Strong as my fervent love is now my hate ;  
The lion in the toils knows not more fury  
Than she whom late thy slightest wish could lead.  
O shame ! O shame ! Would that Vesuvius  
Had burst upon my head, ere I had lived  
To suffer such disgrace ! My father, too,—  
O gracious Heaven, let not this cruel blow  
Cut short his honored days !

LAMBERTI.

Calm thee, Erminia !

Even for your father's sake you must repress  
The passions which contend within your heart.

ERMINIA.

Calm ! calm ! Lamberti ? — But why should I seek,  
With such vain lamentations, to express  
Unutterable woe ? I will be stern !  
Away all woman's graces from my face, —  
All smiles, all tenderness ! I will unsex  
My injured heart, and on my brow I 'll stamp  
Such lines of fierce resolve as warriors wear  
When they rush forth to battle.

(Enter LEONORA.)

LEONORA.

O my friend,  
Haste ! haste ! Thy father dies ! His grief and rage  
Have racked his feeble frame —

ERMINIA.

My father dies ?

For my disgrace he dies, and yet I live !

[*Exit.*]

LEONORA.

Lamberti, follow us. O, woful day !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A chamber. AMIDEI discovered on a couch. LEONORA, LAMBERTI,  
and UBERTI around him.*

AMIDEI.

My breath is fleeting fast. O that false Count !  
'T is he has slain me ! Eighty years I 've lived  
In honor, and had thought so to have died ;  
But Time, who so long spared me, now demands  
Too dear a price for his long grant of years, —  
Even my honor, which my nerveless arm  
No longer can defend.

(*Enter ERMINIA.*)

ERMINIA.

Father, dear father,  
But live, and all is well !

AMIDEI.

Too late ! My child,  
With my last breath take my last legacy, —  
The charge to prosecute my just revenge.

Look to it, girl, as thou wouldest have me rest  
In my last dwelling ; swear thou wilt not fail  
Nor falter in the task ! Let not my kin  
Forget to cleanse the honor of my race  
In the deceiver's blood ; swear, as thou lov'st  
My blessing, and dost dread a father's curse !

ERMINIA.

Ah ! dare I trust myself ?

AMIDEI.

So cold, so blind ?

Dost thou deny a dying father's wish ?  
Think'st thou my soul can rest ? Think'st thou thy life  
Can pass in peace the while my murderer stalks  
Unpunished through the world ? Swear, or receive  
My endless curse !

ERMINIA.

Father, I yield, I swear !

Forgive, forgive me, for I am distraught !

AMIDEI.

Well mayst thou be, poor child, whose every hope  
One day hath blasted ! Ah ! dark shadows close  
Around my eyes ; I lose thee from my sight ;  
Draw near, yet nearer ; take my last embrace  
And blessing ! Kinsmen, be ye true to her !  
Adieu. All 's cold ; all 's dark. Death, death, thy hand  
Is on me. Mercy ! — Heaven ! — Erminia,  
Forget not —

[Dies.]

## ERMINIA.

Father, stay ! My only friend  
For ever gone ! O Death, be merciful,  
And take a wretch who in one hour has proved  
An age of misery !

## LAMBERTI.

O, Leonora,  
Urge her to quit this scene !

## ERMINIA.

No, leave me all.  
Here let me weep away my life, for here  
All joy in it has vanished. Father ! O,  
Am I indeed alone, or do I dream  
That thou hast left me ? Dread reality !  
Wretched Erminia, death indeed is here !

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## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A room in the Amidei palace. ERMINIA and LEONORA discovered.*

ERMINIA.

STILL weeping, Leonora ? Thou mayst weep ;  
I neither can nor may.

LEONORA.

Tears would relieve  
Thy aching heart.

ERMINIA.

My lamentation 's made.  
Affection's cries break not th' eternal sleep ;  
Her tears melt not the icy heart of death.  
Then wherefore should I mourn ?

LEONORA.

I never dreamed  
Till now how false and fatal man could be.  
O, should Uberti prove so —

ERMINIA.

Thou wouldest droop,

And, like the tender dove, mourn out thy life  
For thy lost mate ; whilst I pay scorn for scorn.

LEONORA.

Ah, much I fear it hath no healing power !  
Thy hand is fevered, and thine eye still wild.  
The leech requested, when you were more calm,  
I should admit him. Say, have I your leave ?

ERMINIA.

For what ? That he may search in my weak wrist  
For the strong malady within my heart ?

LEONORA.

He would but minister a composing draught.

ERMINIA.

To torture me with drugs ! I 'll none of them !  
Perchance he knows already the vile cause  
Of this day's misery, and with prying eyes  
Would see how Amidei's daughter bears  
Her deep disgrace !

LEONORA.

O, think it not, dear friend !

Let me entreat thee rest thy wearied frame,  
And lose these racking memories in sleep.

ERMINIA.

O, never shall my disenchanted eyes  
Be closed again in love's delusive dream !  
Last night I stood, with my full happiness  
Too visibly imprinted on my brow,  
Amidst a crowd, whose every murmur breathed

Of love and praise ; — to-day a mark for sneers,  
And envious, gaping wonder ! I 'm no saint,  
To sit and weep beneath such ignominy.  
**A**las ! alas ! I know not what I am,  
While yet that traitor lives, — while his false tongue  
Can boast my fondness, and betray with mocks  
The faltering words won by his specious vows,  
As witnesses of sacred love and faith,  
Breathed but to him and Heaven ! I shall go mad !  
Haste ! call Lamberti !

(*Exit LEONORA.*)

Well might he contemn  
The fool who could not prize his peerless worth,  
And, when she might have mated with the eagle,  
Bestowed her heart upon a flutterer  
But fit to sport from flower to flower, and wing  
In search of novelty his reckless flight.  
My weakness is my punishment ; my heart,  
Bewildered by excess of love, has played  
The sorcerer with my brain, displaying all things,  
Not as they were, but as I fain would have them.  
Yet, cousin, now I have awaked, thou 'lt find  
My disenthralled soul can soar as high  
In honor's daring flight as can thine own.

(*Enter LAMBERTI.*)

Welcome, Lamberti ; thou alone canst fling  
One ray of light upon my gloom : I sent  
To thee for hope.

LAMBERTI.

Thy summons met my wish.

Our kinsmen, fired with generous rage and shame,  
Shake off the sloth of peace, and shout "Revenge  
For Amidei's wrongs!"

ERMINIA.

I breathe again!

LAMBERTI.

This night the heads of many noble houses,  
Allies by friendship some, and some by blood,  
Assemble to confer upon this insult.  
Erminia, I bade them meet me here,  
For there are those of Amidei's blood  
Who urge cold arguments of policy  
Against the plea of honor; that their tameness  
Should not infect our cause I call them here,—  
Here, where thy father's corse, in mute appeal,  
Joins with thy living agonies to rouse  
The knightly ardor of each breast. Wilt thou,  
Should I esteem it needful, nerve thyself  
T' attend this council?

ERMINIA.

Will I keep my oath  
To Heaven, the honored dead, and my own wrongs?  
Show me the trial which I will not meet  
Unshrinkingly! Thou dost not know me, cousin.  
Last eve, 'midst pomp and revelry, these lords  
Thronged round the happy child and chosen bride;

To-night, abandoned, crushed, and fatherless,  
Thou shalt behold me sue to them (if chance  
They need the spur of my complaint), nor cease  
My prayers until they swear to cleanse with blood  
The violated honor of their race.

LAMBERTI.

Most wronged of maids, let them be true or false  
To thy racked heart and to thy murdered sire  
(For Buondelmonti's treachery, though not  
His very hand, hastened the work of death),  
My hand and sword, my fortune and my life,  
Are pledged to thy dear service. Rate me as  
Thy bond-slave, living but to do thy will.  
To me existence offers but one charm, —  
T' avenge thy wrongs. Would that my heart's best  
blood  
Might have averted thy deep sufferings !  
It had been freely given in such a cause.

ERMINIA.

O my best cousin ! faith and pure devotion  
Yet live in thee, and soften my despair.  
I cannot thank thee ; what would words avail  
In the conflicting passions that distract  
My bursting heart ? Yet am I grateful.

LAMBERTI.

Nay,

I am most honored that Erminia deems  
My services of worth. So fare thee well ;

For twilight ushers in the gloom of night,  
And with the night our friends.

[*Exit LAMBERTI*

ERMINIA.

Farewell, farewell,  
Thou with whom fate so strangely links me ! thou  
Whose fondest hopes I crushed ! Now on thy word  
And will my all of earthly hope depends,  
Thou greatly generous ! O, why is truth  
A gem so rare, when earth without its light  
Becomes a hell ? Last night methought that light  
Had found its home in Buondelmonti's eyes,  
Whence its pure rays, like angel-messengers,  
Brought to my tranced soul such gleams of joy,  
Earth was forgotten, and immortal bliss  
Seemed half-revealed to me. Must I believe  
That this was falsehood's treacherous glare ? — believe  
Those eyes of love seek other eyes than mine  
For answering raptures ? — that the lips which breathed,  
So few hours since, from mine the virgin kiss  
Of love and faith are now — My heart is fire !  
Each thought a torturing fiend ! My senses reel  
Beneath th' accursed vision ! O, for madness  
To cloud it from my soul ! — It will not be ;  
Yet, yet must I endure. Let me return  
To the pale dead for strength and calmness ; chill  
My throbbing pulses on his icy breast ;  
So wait my evening's torture. Father, I come ! [*Exit*

## SCENE II.

*A hall hung with black. Enter LAMBERTI and UBERTI, meeting.*

UBERTI.

WELL met, my friend. How fares Erminia ?

LAMBERTI.

Alas ! so young in stern affliction's school,  
Assailed at once by such unequalled horrors,  
'T is wonder that she lives : and yet she holds  
A queenly dignity in her despair.  
I dared not linger near her, for such tears  
As she repressed sprang to my aching eyes,  
Seeing the stifled pangs of one so dear,  
Fatally dear to me.

UBERTI.

Thy constancy

It is that 's fatal.

LAMBERTI.

Say not, think not so !

Speak no light word of holy Constancy, —  
A golden halo round the brow of Time ;  
The smile of Heaven upon the love of earth ;  
The flame that purifies all low desires,  
And crowns the mortal with immortal bliss.  
It is my life of life ! Endymion  
Ne'er turned his eyes with ardor more sublime

Towards the gracious Queen of Night, than I  
 Towards Erminia, my saint on earth.

UBERTI.

And hath Costanza more resplendent charms  
 To tempt Count Guido's change ?

LAMBERTI.

Varying and vain,

He may so deem, and glory in his guilt.  
 Trust me, though like a meteor she may glow  
 Along a summer sky, her brilliancy  
 Is just as fleeting as the meteor's glare ;  
 A thing of vanity, caprice, and art,  
 Her false smiles snare our sex, and thus to her  
 Our dear Erminia's peace is offered up.  
 O, never was more barbarous sacrifice  
 Made to a more unholy deity !

(Enter L. AMIDEI and MANELLI.)

L. AMIDEI.

How sadly this funereal gloom contrasts  
 With last night's revelry ! Is this the hall  
 Where late the song, the dance, the joyous laugh,  
 Lent to Time's wings fresh speed ? Heart-rending  
 change !  
 These woful draperies rudely usurp  
 The place where fragrant flowers and dazzling lights  
 Charmed every eye, and in stern silence show  
 The reign of mirth is o'er.

LAMBERTI.

Manelli here ?

I much mistook you, sir, and deemed you 'd be  
The last to join our solemn conference.  
Your pardon for the thought ; believe me, friend,  
In such a cause I 'm glad to be in the wrong.

MANELLI.

'T is not the spot that one would wish to seek.  
These trappings quite infect me with their gloom.

UBERTI.

Shall we not dye them of a brighter hue ?

MANELLI.

Aha, Uberti ! will you ever jest ?

UBERTI.

So dull ? This looks not well. (*Aside.*) Blood, blood,  
I mean.

MANELLI.

Ah ! this gallant is fierce. I forebode mischief.  
How fares our pretty kinswoman.

LAMBERTI.

But ill.

MANELLI.

Ay, Amidei was a doting father.

When do we celebrate his obsequies ?

LAMBERTI.

Not till we 've read his dying testament.

(Enter MALESPINI, with gentlemen of his house.)

L. AMIDEI.

The Malespini ! Welcome, Signors, all !

## MALESPINI.

Thanks, Amidei. We must now salute you  
Chief of your honorable house.

L. AMIDEI.

Not yet.

Let me defer the rank, so sadly gained,  
Till the last honors are bestowed on him  
From whom I take it. Trust me, I am not  
So avaricious of my kinsman's station,  
As grasp it ere he lies within the tomb.

(Enter FIFANTI, attended.)

LAMBERTI.

Welcome Fifanti ! Is your heart with us ?

FIFANTI.

My heart and sword.

LAMBERTI.

I hoped no less from you.

MANELLI (*to MaleSpinI*).

A word with you, Signor. These youths, I see,  
Are bent on mischief —

[*Aside.*]

LAMBERTI.

Friends, be seated all.

He who last night so blithely welcomed you  
No longer can repeat his courteous greeting ;  
Yet in his service are you here, and I,  
As being to his love and to his blood  
So near, for his sake bid you welcome.

FIFANTI.

If aught you have in charge to us from him,  
We 'll gladly hear it. Am I right, Signors ?

ALL.

Surely.

LAMBERTI.

He named me not his orator,  
Knowing me readier far, if there were wrong,  
To right it with my hand, than prank it out  
With eloquence of speech. Each one of us,  
I trust, bears in each drop of noble blood  
That warms his veins a ceaseless advocate  
In honor's cause.

MALESPINI.

Manelli, hear'st thou that ?  
He 's coming roundly to the point. [Aside.

LAMBERTI.

You know  
How near the insult cast upon our friend  
Touches ourselves.

MANELLI.

We understand your wish ;  
Yet pause ere you involve the city's peace  
In deadly feud. The rights of Holy Church  
Have been assailed ; doubt not the Papal power  
Will give us justice when our wrong 's made known.

LAMBERTI.

O Malespini, canst thou counsel thus ?

Sure thou art gifted with a saintly patience !  
 Why, loud-voiced Rumor, with her hundred tongues,  
 Will echo our disgrace from land to land ;  
 Our foes will say, " Since Florence grows so tame,  
 Well may we hope to crush her boasted strength " ;  
 And every wretch who sinks beneath contempt  
 Shall be called " Florentine. "

MALESPINI.

Your sneers, my lord,  
 Affect us not. For Amidei's sake  
 You claim to speak ; since first his voice was raised  
 In council, he has urged to amity  
 By word and deed.

UBERTI.

Not purchased by disgrace !  
 The honor of his house was to his age  
 The treasure most esteemed, and the first blow  
 Aimed at that jewel crushed the feeble spark  
 Which time still spared.

LAMBERTI.

Uberti, hearken here.

[ Whispers. *Exit* UBERTI

FIFANTI.

For me, I blush that ever Florentine  
 Should need to be urged on t' avenge his friend.  
 What ! is there some infection in the air  
 That chills your blood thus ? for I cannot think  
 This is your natural mood. O good Manelli,

Lay by this mail of caution ; it is cumbrous.

MANELLI.

So hot-brained youth may deem it ; I have tried  
And proved its worth in many a stormy hour.

L. AMIDEI.

O, I am sick of such a wordy strife !  
Would that some foe were thundering at our gates !  
It would be seen then who had most regard  
For our good city's safety ; those whose care  
Would keep their bright swords bloodless, lest they rust,  
Or they who are alive to honor's laws  
And love the clash of steel !

(Re-enter UBERTI, leading ERMINIA.)

MANELLI.

Erminia here !

What may this mean ?

ERMINIA.

Cousin, do not rebuke  
My presence, though unwelcome. I 'm not wont  
To overstep my sex's privilege ;  
Yet fain would I revive my sinking heart  
By your bold counsels.

MANELLI.

Noble kinswoman,

We sorrow with you in your heavy loss,  
And if bold counsels could restore the dead  
We would not fail you. Let us therefore hope  
You come to help us curb the headstrong rashness,

Which would add wrong to wrong.

ERMINIA.

Have I not sworn

That from his sacred memory this disgrace  
Should be effaced with blood ? Within my soul  
There is a strength that would o'erthrow a world,  
Rather than vengeance should elude my grasp !

MANELLI.

Fair cousin, this is frenzy.

ERMINIA.

Would it were !

And yet my reason tells me but one sun  
Hath risen and set, since, in this very hall,  
There stood a maid beset with flatterers ;  
By power, rank, wealth, and love adorned, she was  
A glittering mark for moths to flutter round.  
Quenched are those lights which cast their splendor o'er  
me !

My noble lover false ! My father dead !  
Am I that same Erminia ? Are you they  
Who yesterday were proud to do me homage ?

FIFANTI.

Sweet lady, heed them not, for we are sworn  
To uphold thy cause, despite their coldness.

ERMINIA.

Thanks !

I know ye true, but still I must lament  
That in so many here the noble blood

Is quite dried up by warm prosperity,  
Or lies so stagnant, that 't is mantled o'er  
With such a scum of cowardice and caution  
As sickens the beholder. You, Signor,

[*To one of the MALESPINI.*

It was who swore, while sun and moon and stars  
Held on their course, you were my faithful servant.  
'T is some few hours since I have looked abroad ;  
I know not how the planets may have moved ;  
But, as I dare not to impeach your honor,  
I must believe that all the hosts of heaven  
Have wandered from their spheres. I 'd rather think  
Such portents were abroad, than doubt your word.

GENTLEMAN.

Lady, you do me right ; my sword is yours.

OTHERS.

And mine ! And mine !

ERMINIA.

O gentlemen, all thanks !

MANELLI.

You cannot dream the dangers you invoke !

ERMINIA.

My dreams are of dishonor. O, if they  
Who poison in the earth the healthful springs  
Of life-bestowing moisture, that each wretch  
Who drinks must fall a bloated, loathsome corse, —  
If they must stand accursed, what merits he  
Who taints the heart's pure springs, — whose venom glides

Unseen, yet deadly, through each quivering nerve ?  
O'er every sense dark clouds of horror roll,  
And pleasure, peace, and hope at once expire !  
Aghast the shivering soul beholds her doom ;  
The past is agony, the future dread ;  
The present living death ! I am a wretch  
So racked, so blasted — O, the lowest fiends  
May revel in their ceaseless flames, and shout,  
That earth holds one more tortured far than they !  
This lord or I must fall. Resolve !

LAMBERTI.

We are resolved.

Submission to this wrong were endless shame.  
Blood, only blood, can cleanse the scornful outrage.  
Alone would I maintain this cause, but here  
Good knights and true array themselves with me.

MALESPINI.

These transports wrong us much : we 're true as those  
Who noise their friendship by the clash of swords.  
We would reflect, ere haste to sow dissension —

L. AMIDEI.

Dissension has been sown, is grown, and ripened,  
And we would have it reaped.

MANELLI.

Yet pause : no house  
So powerful in Florence as this lord's ;  
None counts allies so numerous and so strong.  
This is no question of a private vengeance,

Or private feud ; the peace of Florence hangs  
On your decision ; the first blow you aim  
Looses the horrors of intestine war  
Upon our state.

## LAMBERTI.

This insult unredressed,  
We all become a mark for scorn. Who knows  
Where next the shaft of discord may alight ?  
Look to yourselves, my lords, — ye who invite  
Contempt, — and see your household sanctity  
Invaded, and your daughters' peace a jest !  
Beware of such an end !

## L. AMIDEI.

Will ye unite  
In fair Erminia's cause, or give your swords  
To this false knight, and turn their hostile points  
Against your kinsmen ? — for full well ye know  
There is no neutral course. Choose, choose, my lords !

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSES OF MALESPINI AND MANELLI.  
Our choice is made ! Our hearts and swords are pledged  
To Amidei and Erminia !

## ERMINIA.

O gentlemen, all thanks ! Now can I hie  
Back to the chamber of the honored dead,  
Resume my mournful watch, calm in the faith  
That reparation waits his sacred shade.  
Farewell ! the saints watch over ye !

[*Exit* ERMINIA.]

---

ALL.

Farewell !

MANELLI.

Ah, 't is a grievous plight ! but, since the deed  
Is now resolved, I would to Heaven 't were done.

LAMBERTI.

They who would see an enterprise concluded  
Must first commence it.

PIPANTI.

When shall ours commence ?

L. AMIDEI.

To-morrow 's Easter-day. Here meet we then,  
To pay our hapless kinsman the last dues  
Earth claims from earth. Then will we name the hour  
Of our revenge. Till then, Signors, adieu !

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *The chapel.* ERMINIA, LEONORA, LAMBERTI,  
L. AMIDEI, FIFANTI, and UBERTI *discovered.*

ERMINIA.

'T IS finished ! From my eyes for ever hid  
Is my sole earthly friend ! I am alone !  
Dear father, never more thy voice of love  
Shall welcome me each morn to happy days !  
No more when night returns wilt thou pronounce  
Thy sacred blessing on Erminia's head !  
O had I never loved but thee, my sire,  
Thou hadst not left me thus ! I am chastised  
In thy deep loss, for seeking happiness  
Beyond a parent's pure devotion, and  
For sharing with another the fond heart  
Whose every thought should have been only thine !

LEONORA.

Dear, dear Erminia, give thy sorrows rest !  
Peace is with him thou mournest ; on that thought  
Repose thy harassed soul. Thou art unjust  
For grieving o'er thy father ; thou forgett'st

That from a brighter sphere he still regards thee,  
Freed from the weight of dull mortality.

## ERMINIA.

O what has grief to do with reason ? They  
Are stubborn foes, and cannot dwell together ;  
For grief in her strong frenzy brooks no rival,  
And rudely overthrows calm reason's seat,  
And reigns alone. O mock me not with reason,  
But aid me to lament, and lend me tears,  
For there is such a fire within my brain  
As doth forbid my aching eyes to find  
Relief in weeping ! O, I know no hope  
Save in grim Death, and he is treacherous,  
And answers not my call !

## LEONORA.

I 'll weep with thee,  
And for thee, hapless friend !

## ERMINIA.

Oceans of tears  
Could not allay my anguish ! Memory  
Will not be drowned till life is swept away  
By time's devouring flood !

## LAMBERTI.

Look on thy friends ;  
Nor vex their tenderness with thy wild grief.  
Could thy sire's accents penetrate the cloud  
Which screens the immortal from the mortal world,  
Would he not bid thee, even for his love,  
Forego thy mournful plaint ?

## ERMINIA.

O, no ! O, no !

He would not be so treacherous to himself.  
O, no ! He bids me haste to him and hide  
My grief and shame in his protecting arms.  
He doth reproach me, that I still can live,  
When he, who gave me life, hath died for me.  
Ah, never can I cease to call on death,  
Till the grim tyrant, wearied with my cries,  
Shall rid him of my importunity  
By chaining me within my father's tomb !

## LEONORA.

O, rave no more, Erminia !

## ERMINIA.

Call me not

By that name longer ; for Erminia was  
All love, all joy, all pride, and happiness,  
All trusting fondness and unwavering faith !  
But in my heart a host of fiends have risen ;  
Shame, wrath, revenge, despair, — infernal tempters, —  
With scorpion stings destroy each gentler guest.

## UBERTI.

Be it our care to soothe thy pangs. Believe  
That hope again shall dawn for thee, and chase  
Far from thy heart these perilous griefs. Have pa-  
tience !  
For here stand thy avengers, — thine to death.  
We four are chosen by our partisans

To immolate the foe, whose perfidy  
Hath made thee fatherless.

ERMINIA.

O treacherous Guido ! [Faints.]

LEONORA.

Aid me ! Erminia dies ! Lamberti, help !

LAMBERTI.

Wait for me, friends, while to her couch I bear  
This lovely victim. Such a sight must make  
The angels lend their voices to our cause !

[*Ereunt LAMBERTI, LEONORA, and ERMINIA.*

FIFANTI.

My sword already rattles in its sheath,  
Impatient to avenge her.

L. AMIDEI.

Guido's blood

Will cleanse the stain from Amidei's shield ;  
But what shall heal the crushed and bleeding heart  
Of the betrayed ? She seems no more like one  
Whose home is earth ; but ere her spirit mounts  
To the bright realms of peace, his howling soul  
Shall find its guerdon in the realms below !

FIFANTI.

When shall we forth ?

UBERTI.

Lamberti has the charge  
To choose the hour and place of retribution.

(*Reenter LAMBERTI.*)

## LAMBERTI.

To-day, if ever, let our vengeance burst,  
Heavy and sure, upon the offender's head.  
To-day, I learn, he thinks to cross the bridge,  
And pass this house. The blinded traitor dreams,  
Perchance, that heaven and earth forgot his crime.

## UBERTI.

O, never must he see these portals more !  
Never must his insulting glance be raised  
Towards these walls, whose very stones cry out  
Against his guilt ! Ere he hath crossed the bridge  
He dies ! Beneath the statue of fierce Mars  
We will assail him : with his forfeit life  
Our shame shall vanish !

## LAMBERTI.

And the perjurer's blood  
Rush, a libation to the ruthless Mars,  
Beneath whose frown he falls. O, may the reign  
Of falsehood ever be as short as his !  
Ye are prepared, my friends ?

## L. AMIDEI.

We are. Lead on.

[*Freunt.*

## SCENE II.

*A chamber. ERMINIA discovered alone.*

**ERMINIA.**

I **SEEM** awakening from a fearful dream ;  
My brain 's benumbed ; a dim, oppressive sense  
Of evil clouds my thoughts. Where have I been ?  
What horrors seen and heard ? Let me recall  
The past again ; for since the fatal hour  
When to my startled ear, like a death-trump,  
Came Guido's perfidy, passion hath burst  
From reason's guiding hand. What have I done,  
What said, what sworn, in my insensate course ?  
How blindly sought to quench the fires of pride  
And jealousy's hot stings with cold disdain  
And unrelenting vengeance ! Bootless strife !  
Mine is no Fury's heart. The smothered strength  
Of love revives ! And I have sought his death  
Who was my life ! O, were it not a crime,  
I should say **is**, — and yet but little crime,  
For little span of life remains to me !  
False though he be, what power condemns my truth ?  
O, let me bear that with me to the tomb,  
Sole treasure of my early blighted hopes ;  
And rather let me die in gentle sorrow,  
Than live the cherisher of unholy rage !

O, welcome, heavenly light, whose dawn illumes  
My wayward course ! best comforter, thy rays  
Have banished my despair ; for innocence  
May hope that Time's consoling hand will bring  
Peace upon earth, and point to rest in heaven ;  
But where, O, where shall guilt repose ? where hide  
When conscience wakes ? O, happier the betrayed  
Than the betrayer ! Yet I sought his life, —  
Death's seal on my own brow, within my heart  
His rankling arrow ! And although 't was aimed  
By Guido's hand, th' almighty summoner  
Must first have given the mandate. Must I go  
With blood upon my soul ? Have mercy, Heaven !  
Father, my oath hangs heavy on my heart !  
O Virgin Mother, counsel me ! Which way  
Shall I undo what I have done ? restrain  
The passions I have spurred ? What said Uberti  
Of my avengers ? Ah, perhaps even now  
They are about this deed ! Is there no help ?  
Yes, I will fly to save ! — Alas, I shrink ! —  
O woman's pride, where art thou ? In the dust  
Bow thy repentant head ! Away, away,  
All mean regards ! Shall mortal weakness stand  
'Twixt me and Heaven ? Here, Leonora, haste !

(Enter LEONORA.)

LEONORA.

What would my friend ?

ERMINIA.

Where are those gentlemen ?

BUONDELMONTI.

Know you his illness ?

ROSSI.

Rage and shame, my lord,  
At your defection.

BUONDELMONTI.

Peace ! it could not be !

Yet he was old, and loved his daughter well.  
I 'll order masses at Saint Stephen's church  
For his repose. Methinks his obsequies  
Are strangely hurried. But what dusky forms  
Are now emerging from the palace ? Look !

ROSSI.

Doubtless his kinsmen and our foes. Should they  
Espy us here, they will not spare us.

BUONDELMONTI.

Pshaw !

Too long we loiter. Let us on, my friend.

ROSSI.

Past Amidei's mansion ?

BUONDELMONTI.

Wherefore not ?

ROSSI.

Nothing ; save that upon this day 't were best  
To avoid a quarrel.

BUONDELMONTI.

I neither seek nor shun it.

'T is theirs to choose ; theirs be the shame. We 'll see

## SCENE III.

*A bridge upon the Arno. At one extremity a statue of Mars.*

*Enter Brondelmonti and Rossi.*

**BRONDELMONTI.**

SEE ! we approach my former love's abode.  
Think'st thou she weeps for me ?

**ROSSI.**

My lord, she weeps  
A truer friend ; to-day the funeral rites  
Are paid to Amidei.

**BRONDELMONTI.**

Paid to whom ?

**ROSSI.**

Her father.

**BRONDELMONTI.**

He was well but yesterday-morn.

**ROSSI.**

Thou shouldest know well as any how ~~short~~ <sup>long</sup> a time  
Short time effects ; 't was yesterday his death.

**BRONDELMONTI.**

And why have I not heard it ?

**ROSSI.**

"*If this were well*

*To cloud your bridal day with hue of death;*

Draw, villain ! draw ! and, if thou canst, defend  
Thy worthless life !

BUONDELMONTI.

Villain to me, Lamberti !

Methinks thou 'rt zealous to avenge the maid  
Whose smiles you vainly sought. Perhaps they 'll prove  
The promised guerdon of thy chivalry.

LAMBERTI.

Base railler, draw ! I would not murder thee.  
The hangman's hands were fitter far to end  
Thy hated life than honorable steel.

[*They fight, and Buondelmonti falls.*

BUONDELMONTI.

My punishment is just ! Erminia's wrongs  
Required this retribution. Ah, she comes  
To triumph in her vengeance ! Haste thee, death,  
Lest her eye give a wound far more severe  
Than her avenger's sword.

[*Dies.*

(Enter ERMINIA and LEONORA.)

ERMINIA.

O Heaven ! too late !

(Enter the WIDOW DONATI and COSTANZA.)

WIDOW.

What bloody scene is here ?

COSTANZA.

My husband ! — slain !

LAMBERTI.

Thy husband, siren ! Ay, thine even in death !

For ye must meet in those dire realms below,  
Where perfidy receives its hideous doom.  
Gaze on the triumph of thy vanity !  
For this shall Florence curse thy memory  
Through years of furious war.

WIDOW.

O, let thy tongue  
Curse me alone ! but tenfold curses rest  
Upon thy murderous hand —

LAMBERTI.

Vain woman, peace !  
Erminia, let me lead thee hence ; thou seest  
Thy wrongs effaced. Come ! Heavens, thou faintest !

ERMINIA.

No !

LAMBERTI.

Let me support thee ; come !

ERMINIA.

I cannot hence ! —

Not yet. Let me behold his face once more !  
My father, frown not on me ! Thou 'rt obeyed,  
E'en to the brink of everlasting woe !  
And now away each vain disguise ! Away,  
Thou demon, pride, that in thy serpent folds  
Wouldst crush my heart ! Come pity, scorn, disgrace,  
I brave ye all ! Here, where I should have lived,  
Here let me die ! Guido, return, return !  
Thou hear'st not, seest not, know'st not my despair.

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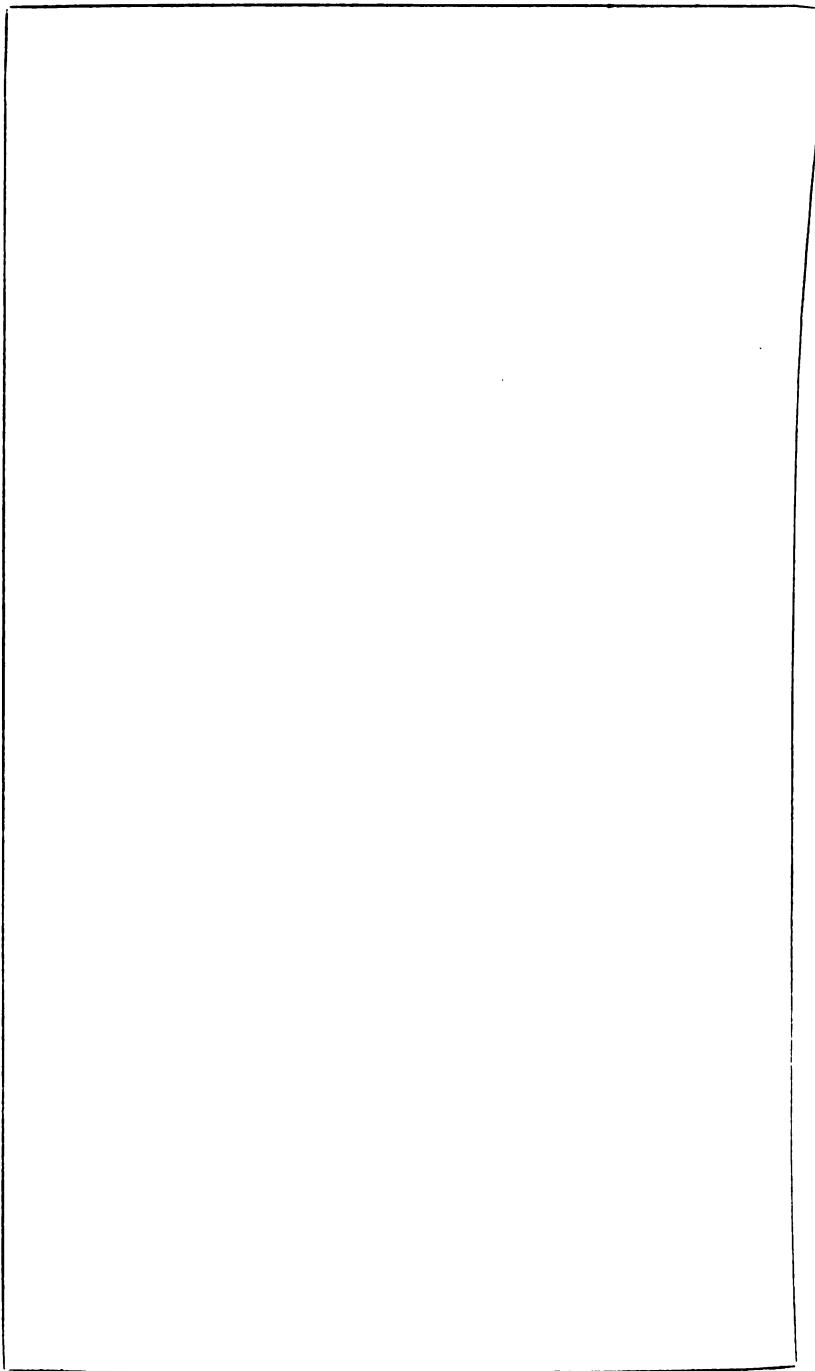
But Heaven is merciful ! My veins are chilled,  
My limbs benumbed to marble ! On my lip  
I feel death's icy breath,— O, breath of paradise  
To my sick heart ! All things below fade from me,—  
But there — above — Stay, Guido, stay ! I come !

[*Dies.*]

LAMBERTI.

Most loved and most deplored of Tuscan maids,  
Ne'er shall the heavy cause of so much woe  
Sink to oblivion, but late happy Florence  
With tears of blood commemorate thy doom !

**THE NEW WORLD.**



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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

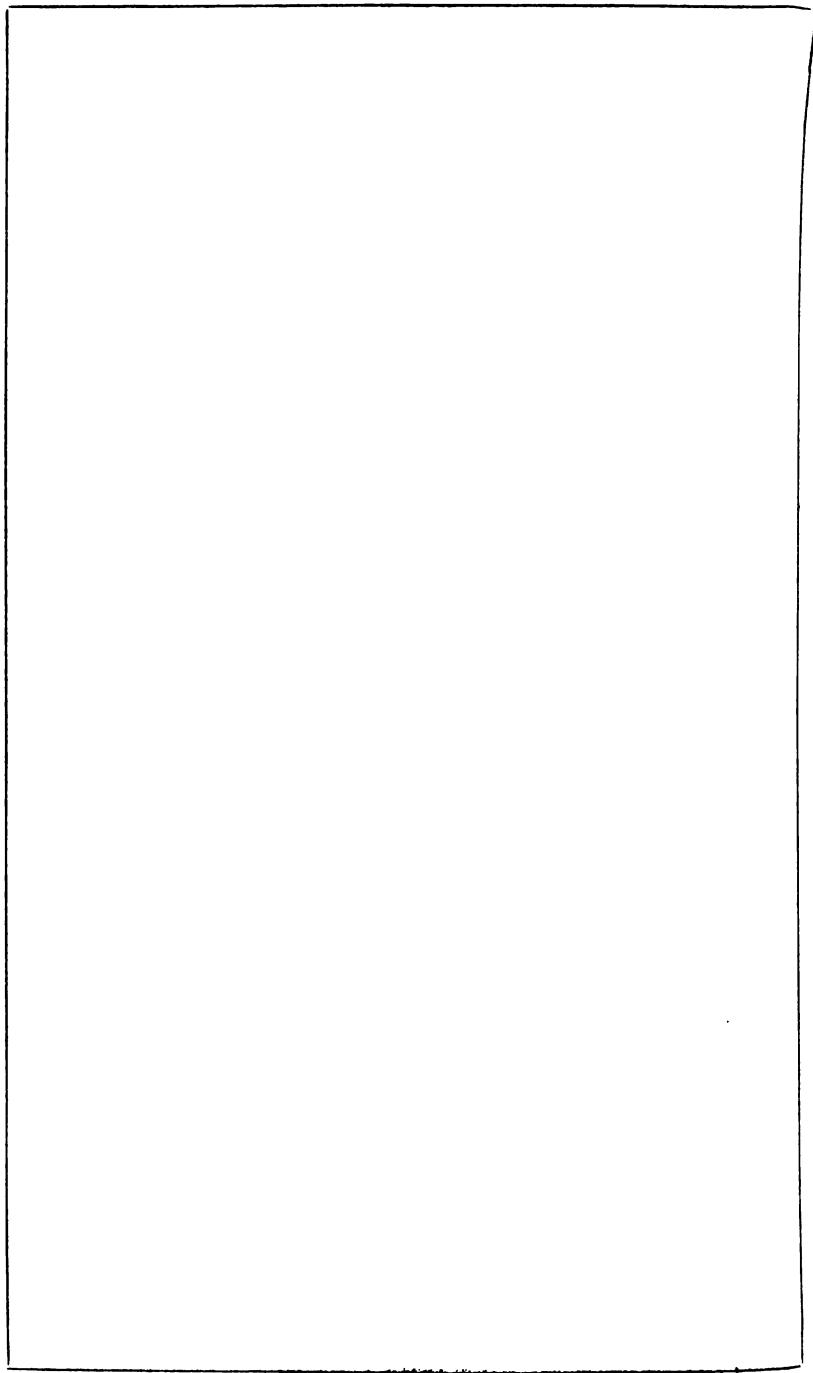
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HERNANDO DE GUEVARA,	. . .	A young Spanish Noble.
FRANCISCO ROLDAN,	. . .	{ Chief Judge of the Island of Hayti, or Espanola.
ADRIAN DE MOXICA, DIEGO DE ESCOBAR, PEDRO REGUELME,	}	. . . Adherents of Roldan.
BEHECHIO,	. . . . .	Cacique of Xaragua.
ANACAONA,	. . . . .	Sister to Behechio.
ALANA,	. . . . .	Her Daughter.

*Train of Xaraguan Maidens. Spaniards. Indians.*

*The SCENE is in the Province of Xaragua, in the Island of Hayti.*

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## THE NEW WORLD.

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### ACT I.

SCENE I. *A grove before ROLDAN's dwelling.* ROLDAN, DE ESCOBAR, DE MOXICA, REGUELME, and other Spaniards.

ROLDAN.

AT length, my friends, our triumph is complete !  
In yielding we are conquerors ! Colon  
No longer dares oppress the sons of Spain,  
But, awed by our resistance to his sway,  
Resigns his hope t' enslave us. Here behold  
The treaty which our firmness has obtained !  
The Admiral empowers me to resume  
My office of chief judge ; restores my lands ;  
Grants me extensive tracts within this province,  
With slaves to till the soil. For you, my friends,  
Whose loyal aid enabled me to hold  
The viceroy thus at bay, I have required  
As just conditions ; — liberal grants of land,  
And, 'stead of tribute from the native chiefs,  
It is arranged that parties of their subjects,  
At stated times, shall aid to cultivate

The soil allotted to you. On these terms  
We are agreed to lay aside our arms,  
And rest content beneath the viceroy's rule.

## REGUELME.

Noble Alcalde, let us here repeat  
Our former vows of fealty ! To you  
We owe our freedom ! When the Admiral,  
Departing for Spain's shores, gave to his brothers,  
Without authority from Ferdinand,  
The government of Hayti, you it was  
Described the bonds they wished to rivet on us,  
And roused us to resistance. Led by you  
We still have triumphed. Here let each renew  
Thanks for the past ! Let all here bend the knee,  
Tendering their vows of future faith ! Alcalde,  
Receive my homage !

[All kneel.]

## ROLDAN.

Thanks, my noble friends !

Roldan is not ungrateful, and by deeds  
Would show his sense of favor. I appoint  
Reguelme the Alcalde of Bonao.

## REGUELME.

Alcalde, you overwhelm me by thus adding  
New benefits to those before conferred.  
Your gifts make me your slave.

## ROLDAN.

My valued friend :  
Ever remain so. For you, Escobar,

And De Moxica, and all others here  
To whom I owe support, the Admiral  
Has portioned out your lands within this province ;  
No lovelier spot on earth has e'er been found ;  
None worthier to be the soldier's home.  
Here will we rest us from the toils of war,  
Secure from care ; here all is peace and joy.  
Nature with lavish hand bestows her gifts ;  
Let us enjoy them, and forget the world  
That lies beyond these valleys.

ALL.

Live Roldan !

His will is ours !

ROLDAN.

My friends, your generous faith  
Is dearer far than all the glittering wealth  
This Western world can give. If tyranny  
Should dare again uprear her serpent head,  
Roldan is yours to crush again the foe.  
Will 't please you now retire ? Ere long we 'll meet  
For further council. You, De Escobar,  
Remain with me.

(Exeunt all but De ESCOBAR.)

Confess, De Escobar,  
That this rebellion is a thriving trade !

ESCOBAR.

It has proved so with us ; thanks to the times,  
And to our leader ! Were the first less rough,

The second less determined, and less skilled  
In all those arts that win the populace,  
We should have rued the attempt. Still, though success  
Has crowned our enterprise, you have not reached  
The prize at which you grasped, — the government.

ROLDAN.

But I am well content. Know, Don Diego,  
That in Xaragua I have found a prize  
Worth all the spoils of Hayti !

ESCOBAR.

Ah ! a mine ?

ROLDAN.

A young, fair girl.

ESCOBAR.

Ambition yields to love !

ROLDAN.

Reserve your smiles till you have seen the maid,  
For, by my patron saint, such matchless charms  
The Old World never saw !

ESCOBAR.

Who is this wonder ?

ROLDAN.

Anacaona's daughter, young Alana,  
Whose sire, the proud cacique, Caonabo,  
Died of a broken heart, when, as a captive,  
He voyaged late to Spain.

ESCOBAR.

You think to win

This Western flower ? Perchance her vows are given  
To some young chieftain of her native isle.

ROLDAN.

Her heart is free as are the sun's bright rays,  
And shall ere long be mine ! — But see, who comes ?  
Behechio, the cacique.

(Enter BEHECHIO.)

Welcome, prince !

What happy chance directs your steps this way ?

BEHECHIO.

One of my tribe brings news, that not far hence,  
Within the valley, a young Spaniard waits,  
Who seeks your friend Don Adrian, or yourself.

ROLDAN.

A stranger, chieftain, or one of my band ?

BEHECHIO.

My people know him not.

ROLDAN.

Thanks, chieftain, thanks,  
For your prompt warning ! I will hasten forth,  
Though now I 've little dread of foes. Perchance  
This stranger is some envoy from Columbus.  
If such, he shall be welcomed with due state.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE II.

*A different part of the valley. GUEVARA discovered alone.*

GUEVARA.

So, this is banishment ! — to be condemned  
To dwell awhile in paradise ! It proves  
That chastisement is sometimes love. The ship  
In which I should have sailed for Spain is gone,  
And here, thanks to my sentence, I can rest,  
Until I 'm wearied e'en of happiness.  
This clime was formed for bliss ! Where'er I turn,  
New beauties meet my eye. Granada's plains,  
So rich in nature's charms that legends say  
The Moorish heaven hangs over them, must yield  
In splendor to Xaragua's vales. But hark !

[*Drums and trumpets heard.*

What martial sound breaks on the slumbering air ?  
Trumpets' and drums' rude notes dispel the charm  
Which made me quite forget that this sweet grove,  
With all its beauty, was of earth. I see  
A numerous train, with all the pomp of war,  
Move slowly on. Is this to honor me ?  
Or rages discord 'mid these blooming scenes ?  
Near and more near they come ; I now descrie  
Their leader's waving plume and glittering spear ;  
How beautiful the sight, as on they march,

Beneath the verdant boughs of those huge trees !  
My pulses bound anew with knightly ardor !  
Fled are th' effeminate dreams of ease, in which  
These soft, luxurious scenes ensnared my soul !  
Now, now I feel what folly 't was to brave  
Columbus' wrath, and so blot out my name  
From the immortal roll on which the world,  
In future days, shall read the glorious deeds  
Of those who gave to light these Western shores.  
The die is cast ! I 'm less than nothing here :  
So let me haste to Spain, and once again  
Stand forth among her chivalry, nor dream,  
In base, inglorious ease, my life away !  
Castile ! Castile ! O, would that I were there !

(Enter ROLDAN, DE ESCOBAR, DE MOXICA, REGUELME, and  
*a numerous train of Spaniards.*)

DE MOXICA (*advancing to GUEVARA*).

Hernando !

GUEVARA.

Adrian !

[They embrace.]

DE MOXICA.

Most welcome, cousin !

ROLDAN.

Most welcome to Xaragua, Don Hernando !  
De Escobar, Reguelme, — all my friends  
Are known to you, I think.

REGUELME.

Welcome, my friend ! What tidings do you bring

From the city and the Admiral ?

DE ESCOBAR.

Most welcome, Don Hernando ! Would you see  
How well rebellion prospers in this province,  
That you have left the viceroy's retinue,  
To grace Xaragua with your presence ?

GUEVARA.

Knights,

I thank your courtesy ; but let me ask,  
Why you approach me with an armed train ?  
Methinks, to greet a friend and countryman  
No war array was needed !

DE ESCOBAR.

It was meant

That your reception should be framed to suit  
The rank you hold. I pray you let us know  
What title may be yours,— if you are termed  
The viceroy's spy or his ambassador ?

DE MOXICA.

De Escobar, this insult to my friend ——

DE ESCOBAR.

May be avenged, if he can wield a sword !

BOLDAN.

Back ! back ! This quarrel 's idle ! What ! so soon  
Wearied of peace that you would slay your friends !  
De Escobar, what means this insolence ?  
It should have been for me to ask the cause  
That brings Guevara here. Señor, I pray you,

Excuse this rudeness ! 'T is so short a time  
Since it was needful to maintain strict watch,  
That we still deem each visitor a foe  
Until we know his purpose.

GUEVARA.

No excuse,  
Señor, is needed. I have learned, ere this,  
That pardoned rebels still dread punishment ;  
Still by their perfidy judge others' faith.  
Believe me, this reception moves me not,  
Or moves me but to laughter, that one knight  
Should cause commotion in your numerous train.

ROLDAN.

Are you an envoy of the viceroy ?

GUEVARA.

No.

I am a banished man, and ordered here  
But to embark for Spain.

DE MOXICA.

How ? banished, cousin ?  
How has Columbus dared assume such sway  
Over a high-born Spanish cavalier ?

GUEVARA.

It matters not ; the viceroy disapproved  
My conduct, and dismissed me from his suite.  
Arriving here, I found the fleet had sailed,  
So thought to task your hospitality.

## ROLDAN.

'T is freely given for your own sake, Señor,  
And for your cousin's. Rest with us, I pray,  
Until you 're weary of this Western world,  
And pine for Spain.

## GUEVARA.

Thanks for your courtesy !

But on these shores I may not long remain.  
I cannot rest inactive ; here, the field  
Of knightly enterprise is closed to me.  
Spain must again receive me on her soil ;  
My sword need not rust there.

## DE ESCOBAR.

There speaks Castile !

Guevara, in all honorable frankness,  
I pray your pardon for my rash suspicions !  
While I esteemed you of Columbus' train,  
My heart was closed against you. I was wrong.  
So there 's my hand.

## GUEVARA.

And mine.

ROLDAN (*to GUEVARA*).

The Indian drum !

Behechio, cacique of this province,  
Comes with his followers to welcome you.

(Enter BEHECHIO, followed by a number of his tribe.)

## BEHECHIO.

Roldan, I haste to offer to your friend

---

The welcome, which it is my will and duty,  
As chieftain of this province, to extend  
To every stranger.

ROLDAN.

Hospitality

Dwells ever with Behechio. Behold  
My countryman, Hernando de Guevara,  
Who fain would see the paradise of Hayti  
Ere he returns to Spain, his native land.

BEHECHIO.

Young stranger, you are welcome to Xaragua.  
If you have sought it with no ill intent,  
I trust you may find pleasure in its vales.  
All they contain are yours while you remain  
Behechio's guest ; their fragrant flowers and fruits,  
The dwellers of the lake, of earth, and air,  
Are at your service ; so Behechio wills it.  
If your designs are evil, may the God  
Who rules us both preserve this peaceful land  
And happy people from your influence !

GUEVARA.

I thank your kindness, chieftain; and, believe me,  
No evil wishes lurk within my breast  
Against your people ; may they long remain  
Peaceful and happy ! In Xaragua  
I 'm but a passing guest. A few short days  
Will see me pillow'd on the ocean's breast,  
Wooing your Western gales to waft me hence,

---

Towards my natives shores. Those shores, indeed,  
Are far less peaceful and less beautiful  
Than thine own groves ; but, O, they 're far more dear !

ROLDAN.

Lo, where approach Xaragua's fair, to greet  
The arrival of the stranger !

(Enter a long train of Indian maidens, with ALANA at their head, bearing in their hands palm-branches.)

Look, my friend,

Upon these island beauties, and decide  
Between them and the vaunted dames of Spain.

(ALANA moves aside, the other maidens kneel and place the palms at GUEVARA's feet.)

MAIDENS.

Welcome, O stranger, to Xaragua's plains !

ROLDAN.

And see, the fair Anacaona comes,  
Moving in state ; Behechio's sister she,  
And widow of the chieftain Caonabo.  
Among her tribe she 's honored as a queen.  
Pay her due reverence, she is worthy of it !

[Aside to GUEVARA.

(Enter ANACAONA, escorted by Indian maidens and warriors.)

ROLDAN.

Princess, let me present my worthy friend,  
The cavalier Hernando de Guevara.

ANACAONA.

The cavalier is welcome to my home ;

Anacaona is the Spaniard's friend.

GUEVARA.

Princess, my people own your constant kindness,  
And are most grateful. For myself, I feel  
Much honored by a welcome so distinguished.  
I am a simple Spanish cavalier,  
Without authority upon your shores,  
And had no right to hope that such reception  
Would wait me from the princes of the land !

ANACAONA.

Think not, O youth, that to the great alone  
We haste to offer hospitality ;  
The name of stranger claims its sacred rites.

DE ESCOBAR.

Which is your island goddess ? [Aside to ROLDAN.]

ROLDAN.

She who stands  
Apart, and silently surveys the scene.  
De Escobar, mark with what native grace  
And dignity she 's stamped ! Not such the mien  
With which our high-born dames of Spain are seen !  
In them art faintly mocks the noble air  
Which nature here bestows without constraint. [Aside.]

BEHECHIO.

Roldan, the feast awaits us ; with your friends  
Haste to partake it.

ROLDAN.

Chief, we follow you. [Exeunt.]

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *A grove, with a fountain in its centre. ANACAONA's dwelling in the background. BEHECHIO and ANACAONA.*

BEHECHIO.

ANOTHER Spaniard ! Thus each day, each hour,  
Brings on these locusts of that far world ! Soon  
All Hayti will be theirs, and we their slaves !  
Cursed be the light that to their longing eyes  
Displayed these shores ! Cursed be the favoring winds  
Which bore their winged canoes across the waves,  
Nor rent each beam asunder !

ANACAONA.

Brother, why  
This sudden rage ? What is 't disturbs thee thus ?

BEHECHIO.

O, blinded to thy fate ! What dost thou ask ?  
Seest thou not day by day these Spaniards wrest  
Our freedom from us, yet canst coldly ask,  
What is 't disturbs thee ?

ANACAONA.

Is there some new wrong ?

In yon fair-spoken Spaniard hast thou found  
A hidden foe ?

BEHECHIO.

'T is not on one, but all,  
That my thoughts turn. How short a time has passed  
Since he whom in their foreign tongue they term  
Adelantado, brother to Colon,  
Entered our province with a warlike train,  
And asked and offered friendship ! Mark the end !  
His followers return, — their avarice  
And love of ease incited by these vales,  
Where Nature's hand provides with lavish care  
For Nature's children. Quickly they report  
The beauties of Xaragua, and, behold !  
Ere long Roldan and his rebellious band  
Take refuge here from justice.

ANACAONA.

You received  
And welcomed them.

BEHECHIO.

True. Think'st thou that I cared  
When these oppressive strangers left their prey,  
To turn and rend each other ? My word was pledged  
T' afford my friendship to all Spaniards, nor  
Had I the power, whatever were my will,  
To guard my province from intrusion.

ANACAONA.

But

Why are you now thus roused ? Nor by Roldan,  
Nor by his band, have we been wronged, and now  
They 're yielded to their chief, and are content  
To cease their strife.

## BEHECHIO.

And turn their restless fury  
Again upon our people ! O my country !  
Once free and happy, how art thou declining !

## ANACAONA.

Behechio, why thus afflict yourself ?  
Why ever dwell upon the gloomiest side  
Of our affairs ? Reflect how much more wise  
These strangers are than we ; — how wonderful  
Their knowledge seems to us ! Compare their ships,  
Which dare the angry waves, to our canoes ;  
Compare the dwellings which they raise with ours ;  
Note well their dress, — th' impenetrable garb  
Which bids defiance to the bow and spear !  
Behold their weapons too, — alas, how deadly !  
A thousand, thousand things at once display  
Our ignorance and their skill. 'T is by the last  
They conquer us. Then let us rather seek  
To win from them the wisdom which is power,  
Than risk unequal strife. O mighty race ! —

## BEHECHIO.

And mightiest still in vice !

## ANACAONA.

O, say not so !

Behold Columbus and his warlike brother !

BEHECHIO.

Ay, they are good and great, — as Spaniards may be ;  
No avarice inspires them ; — yet their hands  
Are stained with Haytien blood !

ANACAONA.

Not willingly  
They shed it, but, alas ! in self-defence ;  
They were the aggrieved.

BEHECHIO.

Woman, rememberest thou  
Thy husband, the proud Carib, Caonabo ?  
Whose hands placed fetters on his free-born limbs ?  
Who tore him from his home, his wife, his child,  
And bore him in their ships far from the land  
Dear to his soul ? He died, Anacaona !  
His eagle eye gazed madly on the bonds  
Which Spanish craft threw round him, and he died !  
Not on the battle-field, where his strong arm  
Was ever first ; not 'mid his faithful tribe  
Did he depart ; but far on unknown waves  
His spirit fainted, and his proud form drooped ;  
'T was there he died, — died of a broken heart !

ANACAONA.

Behechio, spare, O, spare me !

BEHECHIO.

Spare thee ? No !  
Listen, while I recount the mighty deeds

---

Of Spanish friends ! Hast thou forgotten yet  
The day, the fatal day, when down they rushed  
On Caonabo's brother, who had called  
His tribe to avenge their chieftain's loss ? Then, then,  
Burst the loud thunder and the brilliant flash  
Forth from the echoing forest, and thy friends,  
Like autumn leaves, were strown upon the plain.  
Soon on their giant coursers came the foe  
Forth from their covert ; lance, and spear, and sword  
Drank Haytien blood, and o'er the prostrate forms  
Of Hayti's sons careered the horses ; then  
They loosed the furious bloodhound on thy friends,  
Which, not more savage than their Spanish lords,  
Sprang at the throats, tore out the quivering hearts —

ANACAONA.

Cease ! I entreat thee, cease ! Must I endure  
Again the tortures of that scene of woe ?  
Had Caonabo listened to my words  
He still had lived and reigned. Too well I saw  
That 'gainst the weapons of the Spanish band  
No Haytien could stand, and counselled peace.  
My words were vain, and vain are now my tears.  
But, O Behechio, be ruled by me !  
Thy vales are fruitful, and thy tribe at peace ;  
The Spaniards are thy friends ; O, let no rashness  
Destroy this peace, and desolate thy land !

BEHECHIO.

The warning is not needed. No vain hopes

---

Shall lead me to embroil my hapless tribe  
In useless strife. No ; though their doom must come,  
Let me not haste it ! May I never live  
To see my people's misery ! to see  
Their hopeless ruin ! for the day is near  
When all their joys must end ; when slavery  
And labor harsh shall chase the dance and song  
Of the cool evening hours ! O, never more  
Shall liberty and ease resume their reign !  
Sorrow, and toil, and care, the conqueror's sword,  
Will do their work, and our unhappy race  
Must vanish fast beneath them ! — But I see  
Alana comes this way. Let us retire,  
Nor darken with our griefs her sunny smiles.      [*Exeunt.*]

(Enter ALANA.)

ALANA.

How my heart beats ! I thought some one pursued,  
And, turning, caught the gleam of mail, then fled.  
No one appears, so here I will repose,  
And dream of days before these strangers came  
To fill our valleys with the noise of war.  
Hark ! hear I not a step ? No ; all is still.  
I feared it was Roldan who followed me,  
To fill my ear with tedious words of love.  
To-day I like him less than yesterday ;  
Yet know not why, for he 's the same as then ;  
Perhaps I 'm changed ; — but I 'll not think of him.  
I 'll throw myself beside this sparkling fount,

---

List to its gentle murmurs, and inhale  
The breeze that sports amid this verdant grove.

[Seats herself by the fountain, and gazes into it.

(*GUEVARA enters gently behind and bends over her; she sees his face reflected in the water, and starts up with a faint shriek.*)

GUEVARA.

Fair wood-nymph, fly me not ! If I am bold  
In entering thy retreat, thy charms will plead  
Most eloquently my excuse !

ALANA.

Señor,

Xaraguan maids ask not the stranger's homage ;  
They are content to charm Xaraguan youths,  
Whose hearts know no deceit.

GUEVARA.

So young, so fair,  
And yet so stern ! Say, maiden, why you fled  
When late I sought to stay your passing steps.

ALANA.

I thought — I feared —

GUEVARA.

Am I so terrible ?

ALANA.

I feared it was Roldan who followed me.

GUEVARA.

Ha ! here is rivalry ! (*Aside.*) Then I may hope  
You did not fly from me ?

ALANA.

I thought not of you.

## GUEVARA.

That answer might beseem a court coquette ! [Aside.  
Maiden, I have a sister, young like you,  
Who mourns my absence from my father's home,  
With no kind friend to smile away my cares,  
Or share my sorrows ; could that sister think  
That in this Western land there was a maid,  
Young, fair, and gentle, who 'd compassionate  
Her brother's lonely fate, what gratitude  
Would move her tender breast ! She could not think  
That Western maids would spurn the stranger's heart.

## ALANA.

Nay, judge us not so harshly ; we but fear  
His flattery.

## GUEVARA.

Can Western lovers gaze  
On beauty's cheek, nor let the heart's emotion  
Burst forth from lip and eye ? Ah, not so calm  
Our Spanish youths ! With them 't is Beauty's glance  
That prompts to deeds of glory, Beauty's smile  
That well repays all peril. Tell them not  
In Beauty's presence to repress their rapture,  
Nor let their lips proclaim their soul's devotion.  
Vain is the wish to bar love's privilege.  
Thus do they kneel, and pay the homage due,  
And plead, as now I plead, for Beauty's favor.

## ALANA.

How can I answer you ? I dare not think

Your words are more than sport. I pray you, know  
That Western hearts, though not less soft and true  
Than those of other climes, yet do not yield  
To those who seek them but in idleness,  
Nor prize the love they win. Stranger, 't is said  
That Spanish youths, although with many vows  
They bind themselves, know naught of constancy,  
But each fair maid in turn adore, and pledge  
Their broken faith anew.

## GUEVARA.

Let not thy heart  
Harbour suspicion. 'T is the foulest guest  
That ever clouded the sweet sympathies  
Of youthful maiden's breast. In sober truth,  
I love thee, fair Alana ; for my love  
Grant me some little hope to win thy heart.

## ALANA.

Alas, I fear that 't is already won ! [Aside.]  
I cannot say —— I must begone ; I hear  
A stranger's footsteps. [She hurries into the cottage.]

## GUEVARA.

Like a timid fawn  
She bounds away, but bears within her breast  
The subtle dart of love. How beautiful !  
The untamed daughter of the wilderness !  
May it be mine to bear this graceful flower  
To other climes, and show the proud Old World  
That the chief treasure of these Western shores

Lies not in gold or gems, but woman's charms !

(Enter DE ESCOBAR.)

DE ESCOBAR.

I joy to see that in this calm retreat  
Time hangs not heavily upon your hands.  
You miss not, then, the viceroy's mimic court ?

GUEVARA.

That had its pleasures, yet I mourn them not.  
Here Nature is omnipotent, and I  
Am at her shrine a fervent worshipper.

DE ESCOBAR.

Worship not too devoutly at the shrine  
Of Nature's children.

GUEVARA.

Escobar, your meaning —

DE ESCOBAR.

Is plain and friendly. But a moment since  
You parted from Alana.

GUEVARA.

He who dares  
To play the spy upon me is my foe.

DE ESCOBAR.

You are too hasty. I am not your foe,  
But warn you for your safety. Know, Roldan  
Is fixed to wed this island maiden.

GUEVARA.

Ay ?  
Deem'st thou Roldan so dreadful, that his name

Can fright me from my will ? De Escobar,  
I am content that he should be my rival ;  
And when he will, our weapons shall decide  
Who best deserves to win this Haytien maid.

DE ESCOBAR.

Truce with your folly ! Think you he will yield  
To such decision his so-cherished prize ?  
Reflect that he is powerful, and you  
Without support ; why, then, provoke his wrath ?

GUEVARA.

His wrath may serve to fright the simple Indian ;  
The belted knight but scorns so poor a threat.  
Say to Roldan that 't will be seen, ere long,  
Which bears the best blade and most winning tongue.

[*Exit.*

DE ESCOBAR.

Go, foolish boy, rush headlong on your fate !  
Buy with your life an Indian maiden's smile !  
You have been warned, and I can do no more.

[*Exit.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *In ANACAONA's cottage.* ROLDAN, BEHECHIO,  
*and ANACAONA.*

ROLDAN.

You, princess, you, Behechio, know my wish  
To wed Alana. Though I cannot woo  
In flattering phrase, trust me, you could not yield  
The maid to one whose love is more sincere.

ANACAONA.

Win, then, her own consent, and she is thine.

ROLDAN.

Have I your favor, chief?

BEHECHIO.

I am well pleased  
The maiden should wed one whose arm is strong  
To shield her from the woes which I foresee  
Must overwhelm our isle.

ROLDAN.

Then summon her.

(ANACAONA retires, and reappears with ALANA.)

BEHECHIO.

Now may her mother's wit have taught her how

This Spaniard must be answered ! Much I fear  
Her will from prudence will receive no council ! [Aside.]

ROLDAN.

You know my love, Alana ; a blunt soldier  
Abhors delays, nor can with patience wait  
The thousand changes of the female heart.  
I pray you, therefore, say at once you 're mine.

ALANA.

Spare me awhile, Roldan ! I cannot wed !  
My heart is happier in its native freedom !

ROLDAN.

Such vain excuses maidens ever make.  
Bestow on me that gentle, fluttering heart.  
I have no wish to enslave it. Sure my own,  
Which you 've possessed so long, may be esteemed  
Sufficient hostage. Speak !

ALANA.

Not now ! not now ! —

How my head swims ! — O mother, speak for me !

ROLDAN.

Maiden, this trifling I 've endured too long !  
Bethink you that my heart, though rude, perchance,  
Has softened to your charms, and been full long  
The slave of your caprice ; that heart has rights  
As well as yours, nor must they be denied.  
I pray you to be candid. I would know  
If you can be my bride. Still no reply ?  
Perhaps among my followers you 've found

Some knight more worthy to possess your love ;  
One whose more courtly grace and courtly words  
Eclipse so plain a wooer as myself !

[ALANA bursts into tears and throws herself into her mother's arms.

ROLDAN walks about as if perplexed ; then kneels to ALANA.  
Forgive me, loved one, if I seem too harsh !  
Think that my happiness is in your power,  
And pardon my impatience ! Ah, those tears  
Reproach me more than words !

ANACAONA.

Urge her no more !

Go now, nor doubt my influence in your favor.

ROLDAN.

Thanks, princess ! I obey. Much I suspect  
Some other claims an interest in her heart.  
Who dares to rival me may dare oppose  
The hurricane's fell wrath ! Farewell awhile.  
Chieftain, a word with you.

[*Exeunt ROLDAN and BEHECHIO.*

ANACAONA.

Whence are these passionate tears ? Why do you weep  
As if your heart must break ? What hidden grief  
O'erwhelms you thus ? Confide your sorrows to me.  
Can you not love Roldan ?

ALANA.

Love him ! No, no !

ANACAONA.

And is he so abhorred ? You were not wont

To name him in such tones. You have done wrong  
To listen to his passion, if you felt  
Such hatred to him.

ALANA.

O, rebuke me not,  
Unless you 're merciless as he !

ANACAONA.

My child,  
Thy present misery is rebuke enough  
For any fault thy inexperienced youth  
Has led thee to commit. Yet can it be  
That hatred to Roldan is the sole cause  
Of all these bitter tears ? Answer, my child ;  
Is there no other reason ? Ah, that start !  
Then he was right ! Who is the rival ? Who  
Has won this heart that beats so wildly ? Speak !

ALANA.

I dare not say. Roldan's last words still ring  
Upon my ear with most foreboding sound.  
Ah, woe is me !

ANACAONA.

Heed not his threats. Not all  
His arrogance shall win thee from me  
Should you consent —

ALANA.

O, never !

ANACAONA.

So resolved ?

This favored one, is he of thine own race ?  
A Spaniard, then ? — Don Adrian ? — Not so ? —  
Guevara ? — Thy emotion answers. Nay,  
Weep not anew ; Guevara 's formed to win !  
His person, grace, and eloquence of speech  
Might well subdue a heart more hard than thine.

ALANA.

Would we had never met ! Alas, I dread  
Roldan's stern wrath !

ANACAONA.

What shouldst thou fear from him ?

ALANA.

I think not of myself ; but, ah, my mother,  
Roldan's fierce jealousy will never rest  
Until he learns who rivals him ! Alas,  
Death gleamed from his stern eye when he retired !

ANACAONA.

These terrors ill become a chieftain's daughter.  
They live but in thy fancy. Come with me ;  
Subdue thy tears, and banish all thy cares.  
We will consult Behechio, and his judgment  
Shall guide us safely through this present trouble.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*Before ROLDAN's dwelling. De ESCOBAR and De MOXICA.*

DE MOXICA.

My friend, you 're in the Alcalde's confidence ;  
How speeds his wooing with the Haytien maid ?

DE ESCOBAR.

I know he loves her, but I know no more.  
Why do you ask ?

DE MOXICA.

Because, a moment since,  
I saw Behechio and Roldan together ;  
Slowly they walked, and earnestly conferred.  
The chieftain's brow was clouded, and Roldan's  
Was black as blackest night ; as they were near  
Anacaona's cottage, and full oft  
Directed there their gestures, I inferred  
That her fair daughter occupied their thoughts.

DE ESCOBAR.

'T is possible. Roldan himself draws near ;  
If you are anxious, question him, I pray ; —  
And get his dagger through you for your pains. [Aside.

(De Moxica draws back as ROLDAN enters.)

ROLDAN.

A curse on woman's fickleness ! A curse

On my own folly, when I weakly thought  
That in this Western world the sex were free  
From the caprice which governs them elsewhere !

[*Perceives De Moxica.*

Ha ! De Moxica ! Eavesdropping ! Begone !  
Have I no privacy ?

(*De Moxica withdraws with a menacing gesture.*)

De Escobar,  
I trust your friendship ! You must aid my wrath !

DE ESCOBAR.

Command me as you will.

BOLDAN.

Must I repeat  
My weakness and my shame ? Well, listen then !  
When first Alana's beauty caught my eye,  
And with such words as lovers use I wooed her,  
She ne'er repulsed my suit, but calmly heard,  
Like one whose heart was free. From this I hoped  
That time and my devotion might create  
An answering flame. But when, scarce an hour since,  
Sure of my prize, I offered her my hand,  
In presence of her mother and Behechio,  
She answered with evasions, sighs, and tears,  
Nor could my prayers or threats gain further notice.  
'T is plain I have a rival ; who he is  
I know not ; to discover him, my friend,  
I ask your aid.

DE ESCOBAR.

Guevara is the man.

ROLDAN.

Ah, it is possible ! May the foul fiend,  
Who sent him hither, rend me limb from limb,  
If I allow him to bear off my prize !  
What shall be done to rid me of this youth  
Who dares to rival me in love ?

DE ESCOBAR.

I know not.

ROLDAN.

No hesitation ! Quick ! devise some plan,  
Or — [Laying his hand on his dagger.

DE ESCOBAR.

Must it come to that ? Not so, Roldan ;  
Banish him, if you will, but harm him not.

ROLDAN.

Banish him ? Where ? To Isabella, whence  
Colon has driven him ?

DE ESCOBAR.

'T were a jest to see  
The Admiral's proud form dilate with wrath  
At such presumption in the pardoned rebel !

ROLDAN.

Jest not, De Escobar ! By all the saints,  
This foolish girl 's so seated in my heart,  
That if I would I could not tear her thence !  
Your counsel ! Quick, or it may come too late !

DE ESCOBAR.

This is no scene for fiery conference.  
Restrain thy wrathful mood. We will devise  
Some fitting means. Enter ; we 'll talk within.

[*They go into the house.*

SCENE III.

*Before ANACAONA's cottage. ALANA discovered, seated by the fountain. Enter GUEVARA.*

GUEVARA.

HERE dwells my island goddess ! May she be,  
As heretofore, propitious to my vows !  
Ah, yonder she reclines beside the fount,  
Like Venus gazing on her parent wave !  
She weeps ! On earth who can hope happiness,  
When youth and innocence are prey to sorrow ?  
Alana, my beloved, whence are those tears ?

ALANA.

Fly from me, youth ! Ah, fly ! Avoid my presence !  
Danger and death lurk near me !

GUEVARA.

True, my love.

There 's danger in those eyes, whose radiant glance  
Has pierced my heart. There 's danger in each grace  
Thy youthful form displays. I own thy power,  
And yield myself thy captive.

ALANA.

Cease, Guevara,

Nor linger here ! Even now the fierce Roldan  
Swears horrid vengeance 'gainst thee.

GUEVARA.

This confirms

The warning of De Escobar, and now,  
Whilst the fair maid trembles 'twixt love and fear,  
I 'll wile the sweet confession from her lips. [Aside.  
Roldan may threaten as he will ; while here  
I offer up my homage, thou alone  
Fillest all my thoughts.

ALANA.

Guevara, O, forbear,

Nor brave the Alcalde's wrath ! Should he appear,  
Thy life would pay the forfeit of thy rashness.

GUEVARA.

Whence is his sudden fury against me,  
To whom, so short time since, he was a stranger ?

ALANA.

I am the wretched cause.

GUEVARA.

Thou, fair one ? Thou ?

Can he expect to bar all eyes save his  
From gazing on thy beauty, and all hearts  
From paying thee allegiance ?

ALANA.

Ah ! he fears, —

He thinks he has a rival, though as yet  
He knows not whom. Ah, shun his jealous wrath !

GUEVARA.

Jealous indeed ! If he possess that heart,  
Why should he rage against the hapless knight  
Who dares but gaze on thee, without a hope  
To win the treasure from him ?

ALANA.

Well he knows  
My heart was never his, and now he fears  
That 't is bestowed elsewhere.

GUEVARA.

O, let me hope  
I have some share in it ! Turn not away,  
But listen to my suit. Say, by what vows  
Shall I convince thee of my truth ? To doubt  
Were cruelty. Behold, this crystal fount  
Shall in its glassy mirror bear such witness  
To my sincerity, as must remove  
Each shadow of a fear. See thine own charms !  
Who can gaze on them and not be subdued ?  
Ah, yield thee, fair one ! Why shouldst thou deny  
To own, that, though a conqueror, thou canst pity  
The pangs thou dost inflict ? Give me the heart  
Which, trembling, flies Roldan's unknightly wooing !  
Thou yieldest, gentle one ! Thy trembling hand  
Assures my happiness ; ah, let thy lips  
Pronounce me blest, and thus confirm my rapture !

Guevara is removed by banishment,  
The game is yours again.

ROLDAN.

You counsel well ;  
But yet, such is my hatred to that youth  
That I should think my vengeance cheaply bought,  
Even at the price of life.

[*Exeunt ROLDAN and DE ESCOBAR.*]

REGUELME (*to GUEVARA*).

Explain this scene, my friend. The Indian maid,  
Who led us hither, said not how you roused  
The sleeping tiger in the Alcalde's breast.  
Revenge was in his eye.

GUEVARA.

I 've done Roldan  
The injury which man can least forgive, —  
I 've won from him the maiden of his love.

REGUELME.

Look to your life, then, friend ! He 's not the man  
That will forget a wrong. You cannot know  
The deep-laid craft, untiring perseverance,  
And desperate boldness of his character.  
'T is my advice that you should quit the province ;  
You 'll not be safe till then.

GUEVARA.

And leave my prize  
To the Alcalde ? No, not so, my friend.  
Guevara never fled from man. Roldan

May practise 'gainst my life, but to his craft  
I will oppose due caution ; open war  
I 'll knightlike meet !

REGUELME.

Then be it as you will.  
But when you find your foes too many for you,  
Command my aid.

DE MOXICA.

To mine you have the right  
Of friendship and of blood.

GUEVARA.

Thanks to you both !

[*Exeunt REGUELME and DE MOXICA.*

(Reenter ROLDAN.)

ROLDAN.

A word with you, Señor.

GUEVARA (*laying his hand on his sword*).

Ah !

ROLDAN.

No ; not so.

I meet you not upon such terms. Attend.  
Within this province I am as a king ;  
The natives honor me ; a numerous band  
Of trusty followers attends my steps,  
To hear and execute my will ; Colon,  
'Mid all his sounding rank and mockery  
Of princely state, even he had not the power  
To oppose me. Wherefore shouldst thou hope, young  
man,

To brave me in my strength, and bear away  
This Haytien maiden from my watchful care ?

GUEVARA.

Roldan, what right claim'st thou to wed this maid,  
Despite her own refusal of thy hand ?

ROLDAN.

The right of power.

GUEVARA.

Ay, true ! The unknightly taunt  
Suits well the plebeian lips that uttered it !  
But canst thou be so base as to refuse  
To leave to our good swords the arbitrament  
Of this dispute ?

ROLDAN.

Why should I grant such favor ?  
The arbitrament 's already in my hands.  
Why should I stake upon my weapon's thrust  
What is already mine ?

GUEVARA.

Why do I ask  
The churlish blood that stagnates in thy veins  
To flow in unison with the pure stream  
That warms a noble's breast ? Why should I think  
The low-born clown, who basely gained his power,  
Could wield that power with honor ? Far too much  
I graced thee when I crossed my sword with thine ;  
For thy ignoble blood would shame the blade  
Which ne'er, before that hour, was drawn 'gainst one

So far beneath the rank of gentleman.  
Coward and churl alike, thy heart knows not  
The throb of honor.

ROLDAN.

Coward, say'st thou, youth ?  
Take back the falsehood, or —

GUEVARA.

Or thou wilt call  
Thine armed minions to avenge the scorn ?  
No ! I repeat it, — Coward ! For what is he  
Who dares not with his sword assert his honor ?

ROLDAN.

Dares not, thou misproud knight ! Full well thou know'st  
Nor earth nor hell can show the deed I dare not !

GUEVARA.

I grant it, so 't is base.

ROLDAN.

Have I not braved  
The Adelantado in his upstart course,  
Thrown off his yoke, and even against Colon  
Made firm resistance, till he did me right ?

GUEVARA.

O, doubly base, since, with unblushing front,  
Thou canst adduce thy vile ingratitude  
To prove thy claim to courage ! No, Roldan,  
The courage which ennobles springs from honor.  
Such courage hast thou as the venomous snake,  
Which rears its slimy crest behind its victim,

And in his heel inflicts the fatal wound.  
'T was when Colon was absent that you sought  
By your foul calumnies to undermine  
His hard-earned fame, and to possess his power.  
But you were baffled there, thanks to our queen,  
Whose high Castilian blood would never give  
Castilian subjects to such sway as thine !

ROLDAN.

And what, then, is Colon ? His ancestry  
Can scarce claim more respect than mine.

GUEVARA.

Not so.

Who, when the sun slow rises from the east,  
Asks whence it comes ? Who, when the eagle soars  
On untamed pinions upward to the sky,  
Asks of his birthplace ? None. Columbus stands  
Alone, nor needs a brilliant ancestry.  
The glorious halo which surrounds his head  
Would render dim the most renowned descent ;  
Nor will men look beyond that blaze of fame  
To know if light or darkness dwell behind it.  
Columbus never erred, save when he raised  
A reptile, such as thou art, from the dust,  
Where, but for him, thou wouldest have crawled for aye.

ROLDAN.

My patience vanishes ! — Yet wherefore vent  
My passion to my own undoing ? He  
Whose hands are tied may vent in wordy war

The rancor of his breast. Adieu, Señor ;  
You 'll learn full soon what 't is to brave Roldan. [Exit.]

GUEVARA.

The rebel caitiff ! Could I but arouse  
One spark of knightly ardor in his breast,  
Then might I hope my trusty blade would win  
The maid, whom much I fear will ne'er be mine,  
While he maintains such stubborn policy ;  
For he has strength, and I am powerless.  
Accursed fate that brought me to this isle !  
Why did I leave thee, Spain ? why quit the court  
Where happiness and honor bloomed around me ?  
For there each knight confessed my martial skill,  
Each beauteous dame smiled on me. Here Roldan,  
Who in our own land never could have hoped  
The honor of my notice, — he can now  
Threaten a Spanish noble ! — Dread his power !  
Or yield my will to his ! As if I knew  
What 't was to yield ! — Not even Colon could teach  
Guevara such a lesson ! Let Roldan  
Look to himself ! The party which he formed  
Against Columbus may be lured to turn  
Against their leader. I will to the work,  
And teach this upstart churl how insecure  
Is ill-gained power.

(Enter DE MOXICA.)

Ah, welcome, Adrian !

DE MOXICA.

Is he who brings ill tidings welcome ?

GUEVARA.

Ah !

Ill tidings ! Trifle not, I pray you, cousin !

DE MOXICA.

You 're banished to Cahay.

GUEVARA.

Banished ! By whom ?

DE MOXICA.

By whom but our Alcalde, mighty man !

Who one day for a kingdom wages war,

The next is battling for a woman's favor.

GUEVARA.

And has he dared do this ?

DE MOXICA.

He dares do aught

That ever mortal dared. Yet this, methinks,

Is no such mighty deed ; — 't is but to oppress

One who is powerless.

GUEVARA.

I will appeal

Back to the viceroy 'gainst this flagrant wrong.

DE MOXICA.

Appeal thou to Roldan against Colon,

And there is chance that thou mayst gain thy cause.

Full well you know, that in our late rebellion,

So void of means was he to take the field,

He was content to purchase our submission

By granting full assent to all our terms.

## GUEVARA.

True ; true ; I raved. What course can I pursue ?

## DE MOXICA.

What course ? The course that leads you from this province.

## GUEVARA.

Moxica, no ! To leave yon gentle maid,  
On whom my wooing draws the Alcalde's wrath,  
Were a foul blot upon my knightly fame !  
But for my fatal love, she ne'er had known  
Her present misery. I 've wooed and won  
This lovely one ; have vowed through weal or woe  
That my right arm should ever bear her up  
Upon life's stormy path ; and shall I fly  
From the first cloud that lowers above our heads ?  
When I do this, then may my knightly crest  
Be humbled in the dust, my spurs hewn off,  
My spotless shield reversed !

## DE MOXICA.

Hernando, hold !

Where you cannot resist, there is no shame  
In yielding. By my knighthood, you must go !  
There 's no alternative. And for the maid,  
Your friends will see that she 's not forced to wed  
The Alcalde. If she 's fickle, like her sex,  
And to the present lover most inclines,  
You must submit.

## GUEVARA.

Roldan will force me hence ?

**ALANA.**

Would that they were vain !

But no, Guevara. I can read our doom  
In the Alcalde's eyes. Alas, my sire,  
How little didst thou think, when thy strong arm  
Upheld thy much-loved child, and warlike bands  
Thronged round their mighty chief, that ever woe  
Would blight her youthful days ! No thought of foes  
From distant lands, more powerful than thyself,  
E'er crossed thy dauntless breast. But thou art gone ;  
And 'mid those hills where once thy haughty eye  
Glanced proudly o'er a tribe whose faithful hearts  
Throbbed high to do thy will, a helpless few,  
Enslaved, degraded, hide their hunted heads  
And die in woe, where once they lived in power.

**GUEVARA.**

Her words are daggers to my breast ! E'en so  
Have Spanish hands made desolate the soil,  
And trampled on its free and happy sons,  
And deluged Haytien earth in Haytien blood.  
Would that the deep remorse which wrings my heart  
Might reach each Spaniard who has raised his arm  
Against this hapless race !

**ALANA.**

I meant not to upbraid thee, but my thoughts  
With present sorrow contrast former bliss.  
Thou 'rt gone, my father, and thy helpless child  
Quails 'neath a Spaniard's glance. Woe for the land

Which slumbers thus beneath the oppressor's rod !  
Whose men are women, and whose women call  
In vain upon those men to nerve their hearts,  
And die or conquer in their country's cause !

ANACAONA.

Alana, cease, nor rend thy mother's heart  
With vain complaints ! Thy words renew my woes.  
Past horrors rise again before my eyes.

ALANA.

Forgive me, mother ! Let thy child's embrace  
Banish thy anguish !

GUEVARA.

I, alas, have helped  
To widow such a mother ! I have helped  
To render such a daughter fatherless !

[*Aside.*

[*Exit ANACAONA.*

ALANA (*to GUEVARA*).

Your brow is clouded, too. My rebel tongue  
Hath ill expressed the feelings of my heart,  
Since it offends the friends whom most I love.

GUEVARA.

No, gentle one ; each word of thine to me  
Is far more dear than I can tell. 'T is I  
Whom ruthless fate condemns to grieve and pain  
The maid for whom I 'd die. Alana, he  
Who sees with envy that I am beloved  
Condemns me to depart from thy sweet presence.

## ALANA.

Guevara, leave me not ! In pity, stay !  
If your deep vows of love were e'er sincere,  
Remain ! Protect the hapless Haytien maid,  
Whose love and faith to thee have caused Roldan  
To threaten direst vengeance on her head !

## GUEVARA.

And did he threaten thee ? Now, by the saints,  
But little hinders that I cast aside  
That honor which he knows not, and despatch  
The shameless ruffian with my dagger's point !  
And did this chance since last we met, my love ?

## ALANA.

Scarce an hour since. He vowed, whoever I loved,  
I should wed none but him ; — vowed with fierce oaths  
And threats against thy life.

## GUEVARA.

What saidst thou then ?

## ALANA.

What could I say ? I wept, which but the more  
Enraged his savage heart, because my tears  
Bore witness to my love.

## GUEVARA.

Ah, luckless knight !

What evil star presided at my birth,  
That thus my fondest love must prove a curse ?  
Alana, I must leave thee, for Roldan  
Rules here with iron sway ; I have no power.

V.

W.

H.

A.

AN.

W.

H.

I.

D.

G.

He. ....

You.

hat.

Shoe.

and !

N.

L.

W.

T.

W.

Cou.

Say,

no cross

The Alcalde's path are seldom safe.

ALANA.

Then go !

O, haste away, while I remain,— and die !

GUEVARA.

Despair not, dearest one ; we 'll meet again !

Ere yonder moon fulfils her destined course,

Before again her silver crescent gleams

Above these groves, Guevara will be here,

To live or die for you, as fate decrees.

Loved one, farewell !

ALANA.

Ah, stay, Guevara, stay !

GUEVARA.

What would my love ?

ALANA.

Nothing ; but yet I fear

This parting is our last.

GUEVARA.

Be firm, fair maid,

Nor heed the Alcalde's threats ! — She hears me not !

Quite overwhelmed with grief ! I will not go

And leave this gentle maid in such despair !

Come one, come all the minions of Roldan,

I will defy them all ere I 'll desert

This unprotected one ! Hear me, my love !

Thy tears have conquered ; here I will remain

While my life lasts !

DE MOXICA.

Guevara ! are you mad ?  
Hear me, Alana ! If you love this knight,  
Or if you value your own life, control  
This passionate grief, and bid him not delay.  
Fear not Roldan ; for, by my knightly faith,  
You shall not be compelled to be his wife.  
But if to-morrow see my kinsman here  
I cannot answer for his life.

ALANA.

Ah, fly,  
Nor heed my weakness ! fly, ere yet Roldan  
Pours his fell vengeance on thy head !

DE MOXICA.

Ere this,  
But for De Escobar, thy blood had paid  
The forfeit of thy rashness.

ALANA.

Some one comes !  
It is Roldan ! Ah, save me !

(Enter DE ESCOBAR.)

DE MOXICA.

Escobar !  
What would you here ?

DE ESCOBAR.

Moxica, naught with you.  
My errand 's with Guevara.

GUEVARA.

Well, Señor,

What would you with Guevara ?

DE ESCOBAR.

To repeat,

As a command, my former friendly warning.

'T is time you turned your back upon Xaragua.

GUEVARA.

I am aware, sir, of your master's will ;

It needs not repetition ; I 've no choice,

And must submit.

DE ESCOBAR.

My master, as you term him,

Like other men, uses the power he has

As best may suit his humor. Some might find

A thousand whims, which to their eyes would seem

Far worthier of pursuit than is Roldan's.

His whim is to possess this Indian maid.

My errand 's not to vindicate his will,

Nor would I quarrel with you, though I 'm bound

To enforce his orders. Trust me, Don Hernando,

That this decree, sprung from Roldan's caprice,

Is one most fitted for thy real welfare.

Haste to thy native Spain ; assume the rank

To which thy birth and talents give thee claim.

Thou art a noble youth, and pity 't is

That thou shouldst linger on these Western shores,

To lose thy life in an ignoble strife.

GUEVARA.

De Escobar, I thank you ! Your advice

Is such as I should follow, but my will  
And duty are at variance. Oft you 've seen  
A bark, whose rowers faintly ply the oar  
Against the rushing current ; thus with me ;  
Duty, like some o'erwearied oarsman, pulls  
In vain towards the proper haven, while  
The current, inclination, bears me on  
Towards shoals and quicksands. Yet I must submit  
To your commands, but pray of you the grace  
To linger half an hour.

DE ESCOBAR.

I will await  
That time within the vale where first we met.  
An escort there attends. Meanwhile, adieu.

GUEVARA.

Adieu, Señor ; thanks for your favor.

(*Exit De Escobar.*)

Now

There but remains to say the last farewell  
To thee, fair maid, whose image is enshrined  
Deep in my heart ; thou 'lt have no rival there,  
Though we should never meet again. Weep not,  
Or you 'll unman me quite. Loved one, be firm !  
I will return ; perhaps to overthrow  
Thy tyrant's power. Good night, my love, good night !

[*Ereunt Guevara and De Moxica.*

ALANA.

Evil 's our parting ; evil was the hour

When first we met and loved, but to be severed !  
Each night I 'll sit and watch yon silver moon,  
Which moves so brightly, free from mortal cares,  
And as she slowly wanes I will rejoice  
That so much nearer is my love's return ;  
For when with slender horns she faintly beams  
Anew along the sky, he will be here ;  
Preserve me, gentle Hope, until that hour !  
Then, if he come not, welcome, welcome, Death,  
Rather than slavery.

[*Exit.*]

#### SCENE V.

*The forest. Enter GUEVARA.*

##### GUEVARA.

HERE first we met, and here we should have parted.  
'T is strange this Western wood-nymph should have fixed  
The heart where love had ne'er before the power  
To rivet his soft bonds ! But they 're secured  
Beyond my power to loosen, and methinks  
I would not if I could ; they are too dear !  
Yet what a sacrifice ! De Escobar  
Has struck the chord which never yet refused  
To answer the least touch, — ambition ! Ah,  
Can I remain to waste my youth, my life,  
Perchance, my hopes of high renown,  
For the faint hope of conquering Roldan

And winning young Alana? Yes! In vain  
Ambition holds her lures. I will be true  
To her who loves so fondly and so truly;  
True to myself,—for could I e'er know peace  
Away from her? I love this gentle maid  
As knights should ever love, with faith and ardor.  
Her must I win before again I view  
My native Spain; then will I haste away,  
And show the Spanish court my Haytien gem,—  
The dearer, that 't was won with blood and toil.

(Enter De ESCOBAR, attended.)

DE ESCOBAR.

Guevara, you are punctual. Behold  
A trusty escort. These, with due respect,  
Will guide you to Cahay. And now farewell.  
All joy attend you! May you ne'er behold  
Xaragua's vales again! That wish should be  
The wish of all who deem Guevara's honor  
Of higher import than Guevara's pleasure.

GUEVARA.

Farewell, De Escobar! I'll think of thee  
As one well worthy of the spurs he wears.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Before ANACAONA's cottage.* ROLDAN,  
ANACAONA, and BEHECHIO.

ROLDAN.

Too long I 've humbly sued. The maid must know  
That he who begs the grace he can command  
Will list to no refusal.

BEHECHIO.

Spaniard, hear me !  
I 've oft submitted to your tyranny  
Because my people's lives were dearer to me  
Than my own power ; but this last insolence  
I will oppose while I have life. Our maids  
May mate with Spaniards when it is their will ;  
But while Xaragua's tribes call me their chief,  
No daughter of Xaragua shall be forced  
To wed a Spanish master.

ROLDAN.

Say'st thou so ?  
And dost thou think to oppose thy will to mine ?  
The maid shall be my wife.

BEHECHIO.

Her will alone

Shall govern her.

ROLDAN.

My will shall govern her,

And you —

ANACAONA.

O, cease this discord ! What avails it ?

Roldan, content you. You shall urge your suit  
To her who must decide it. Hapless child !

If from her Carib sire she had received  
The Carib spirit, she were far more fit  
To wrestle with her fate ! (*Approaching the cottage.*) Alana,  
haste,  
Come forth !

ALANA (*coming from the cottage*).

What would you, mother ? Ah !

[*She perceives ROLDAN, and turns to retire.*

ANACAONA.

Remain.

[*Exeunt ANACAONA and BEHECHIO.*

ROLDAN.

Alana, shun me not ; what do you fear ?  
If those who love you are received thus coldly,  
How would you look upon your enemies ?  
This little hand declares its mistress' heart,  
And trembles in my grasp as if 't were pressed  
By venom'd snake. Alana, is this well ?

Why should you hate me thus ?

ALANA.

I bear no hate  
To aught on earth, except my own existence.

ROLDAN.

Hate aught on earth except its brightest gem !  
Hate sun, and moon, and stars, and hide their rays  
'Neath thy displeasure, but shine on thyself,  
The brightest star that e'er shed smiling hope  
Upon a wanderer's heart, and beaconed him  
To shelter and to joy !

ALANA.

Alas ! alas !  
A star hid 'neath dark clouds, whence jarring storms,  
Thunder and lightning fierce, burst forth.

ROLDAN.

Fair maid,  
Complain not of those storms, since thou hast power  
To shed thy smiles, and, like the noonday sun,  
Dispel all gloomy vapors from the air.

ALANA.

I once could smile. Those careless hours are fled.

ROLDAN.

Smile upon me, Alana, and that smile  
Shall be to us the sign of peaceful union  
Between thy race and mine.

ALANA.

Would that a smile

Were the sole pledge required !

ROLDAN.

Now aid me, saints !

For a blunt soldier's brain lacks the swift wit  
To match a woman's humors. (*Aside.*) No, Alana,  
Thy wish is vain. More than a smile 's required.  
This is the bond which shall unite our people.

[*Takes her hand; she withdraws it.*

Is this thy answer ? — O for some strong spell  
To chain the rising dragon in my breast ! [Aside.  
Alana, since we met thou know'st I 've stooped  
To win thy favor as I would not stoop  
Even to my king, though such humiliation  
Would gain a crown. If I 've seemed harsh at times,  
The fear to lose thee moved me to such madness.  
And though of late thou hast repulsed my wooing,  
It was not so when first I knelt, — when first  
I told the tale which to a woman's ear  
Is ne'er ungrateful.

ALANA.

True, all true, Roldan ;  
But I was weak and foolish ; then my heart  
Knew naught of love, — and I was wrong, — most wrong.  
O, be thy wrath appeased by this abasement ! [Kneeling.  
Forgive me, and forget me !

ROLDAN.

Maiden, rise !  
Subdue these childish tremors, and be firm.

I will address thy reason, not thy heart.  
Listen, Alana, and weigh well my words ;  
For on thy answer hangs the fate of him  
Who won the love which once I fondly hoped  
Would rest on me ; and on thy answer hangs,  
Perchance, thy people's fate. Dost understand ?

ALANA.

Too well !

ROLDAN.

Since Don Hernando now is banished,  
No longer will his presence feed the flame  
Which his false flattery raised within thy breast.

ALANA.

Roldan, of thine own cause say what thou wilt,  
But think not to asperse my absent friend.

ROLDAN.

Pique but a woman's vanity, and straight  
She 'll speak, though she before were spellbound. [Aside.  
He 's gone, nor will return ; ere this the ship  
Which has received him spreads her snowy sails  
To catch the Western breeze, and ploughs the wave  
Towards his native land.

ALANA.

It is not so !

Revoke thy words, Roldan, in charity !  
Say that thou hast deceived me, — that Guevara  
Is still upon the island, — and I 'll be  
Your slave !

ROLDAN.

What frenzy seizes you ? Is 't strange  
That this gallant, finding no longer hope  
To mar my wishes, has at length obeyed  
The viceroy's orders, and embarked for Spain ?

ALANA.

Thy words have wellnigh killed me ! Let thy sword  
Complete the sacrifice ! If this be so,  
Where shall I look for faith ? — I 'll not believe it !  
He is the soul of truth ! 'T is some foul craft  
Of thine, Roldan, to crush still more my heart,  
And mould it to thy will. But thou shalt fail !

ROLDAN.

Hear me, Alana, —

ALANA.

Off ! I will not hear thee !

ROLDAN.

By Heaven, thou shalt both hear and answer me  
In milder mood than this ! A soldier's patience  
Is ever brief, and mine is of the briefest.  
Tax not my mood too far, for thy weak hand  
Has not the skill to rein it.

ALANA.

'T is a task

I would not seek.

ROLDAN.

Hear me ! Thou seest thy race,  
Where'er they 've sought to oppose the Spanish arms,

Fall victims to their rashness, and their homes  
Become the conqueror's prize. Xaragua's plains  
Have yet escaped, for peace still reigns between  
The Spaniards and thy tribe ; but this may vanish.  
Perchance the embers now exist of discord,  
And who can say how soon a blast may rise  
To fan them into fury ? Know'st thou not  
That oftentimes when the air is calm, the sun  
Without a cloud, and nature all at peace,  
Bursts forth the dread Urican, whose fell breath  
Brings universal desolation ? Know  
Man's passions are Uricans, deadlier far  
Than those the warring elements produce.  
They have swept o'er this island, but have left  
One little spot of peace, — this blooming province.  
Yet here they may burst forth, and strip these vales  
Of all their charms. Wouldst thou avert the doom ?

ALANA.

At cost of life.

BOLDAN.

I would that thou shouldst live,  
Not die for it. Behechio has resolved  
He 'll not bestow thee on me, save thy will  
Accompanies thy hand.

ALANA.

Ah ! said he so ?  
Then there is help. O, I was most unjust  
To think that he would see me sacrificed !

BOLDAN.

Each word she utters more inflames my wrath ! [Aside.  
If thou art wise, be silent, and attend.  
Behechio has threatened this, and I  
Have sworn thou shalt be mine. Canst thou divine  
How this will end ?

ALANA.

Would I could answer, No !

BOLDAN.

Behechio resists me ; thy weak race  
Stand forth to oppose the Spaniards, — to oppose  
Their unarmed bodies to the sword and spear  
Of fatal steel ; while from the impervious mail  
Their arrows fall innoxious. Say, Alana,  
How must this end ?

ALANA.

O man of violence,  
Destruction hangs upon thy lips, and death  
And desolation seem but sport to thee !  
Where must this end, you ask ? Not where you wish.  
Thou know'st not, Spaniard, where it shall begin ;  
For when thy hand is raised against my tribe,  
I will commence the work, and in my breast  
Plant the first steel that 's bared, ere clasp thy hand  
Red with my people's blood.

BOLDAN.

And will thy death  
Avert thy people's fate ? No ! by the saints,

If thou shouldst dare the deed thou threatst me with,  
I will do one more terrible ! Thine eyes  
Should rest in dying on thy noble mother,  
And hundreds of thy friends in chains around her,  
Writhing in tortures such as fiends invent  
To aid man's vengeance. But why do I threat ?  
Life is too dear to one so young and fair,  
To be resigned so rashly. Thou hast heard  
The horrors of resistance ; listen now  
To the reverse. Consent to be my bride.  
My rank and power will shield thy native vales  
From the oppression which now desolates  
The rest of Hayti ; thou fair maid, wilt be  
The pledge of peace and faith. This little hand  
Shall form a chain of concord, stronger far  
Than all the gold which Hayti's isle can boast,  
Though it were forged in links which might withstand  
A giant's grasp. I know thou lov'st me not ;  
I know the heart is gone whose wealth I sought ;  
Yet doubt I not in time it would return  
To its liege lord. Say, when thy homes are burned,  
Thy friends, or dead or dying, lie around,  
What then will it avail thee that this woe  
Springs from thy love to one, who, far away,  
Knows not the desolation he has caused ?

## ALANA.

Roldan, you urge me cruelly. Alas !  
I know your power ; I know my people's weakness.  
But press not my decision ; give me proof

Of the devotion you so oft profess.  
The summer moon is in her glory now ;  
Wait till she vanishes, and the next moon  
Uprears her slender horns. Be generous.  
Leave me in peace till then. Grant me this boon,  
And I will think it proves thy love as deep  
As oft thou 'st sworn.

ROLDAN.

Alana, be it so.

Weigh well my words, nor deem them empty threats ;  
For know, my head has never planned the deed  
My hand was slow to execute. Farewell !

[*Exit ROLDAN.*

ALANA.

I do believe thee. Not the incarnate fiend,  
Whose doings oft I 've heard thy followers tell,  
And tremble as they told, had less remorse  
To do the evil deeds in which he joys,  
Than thou and thine to follow in his steps.

(*Reenter BEHECHIO and ANACAONA.*)

ANACAONA.

Thy tyrant 's gone.

ALANA.

He has.

ANACAONA.

Thy tears attest  
The harshness of his words.

BEHECHIO.

Poor, trembling maid,

Would I could save thee from the woes that hang  
O'er our devoted race !

ALANA.

I 'm doomed to be  
The foremost victim.

ANACAONA.

Say not so, my child !  
The Alcalde's wooing 's harsh, yet by his threats  
He means but to affright thee.

ALANA.

O mother, you are strangely blind !

BEHECHIO.

You 're right,  
And you, Anacaona, wrong. Alas !  
Will naught remove the film that from your eyes  
Shrouds every danger ? Caonabo's death  
You can excuse, can see your daughter wronged,  
And vainly judge his enemies and hers  
By your own purity of heart. 'T is woe  
That thy own virtues must be made the snares  
To entrap thee ! Yes, Alana, much I doubt  
If aught but death can save thee from Roldan,  
And should rejoice if thou couldst school thy heart  
To hear his wooing patiently.

ALANA.

I 've gained  
Some short delay, and promised, when the time  
He 's granted at my suit shall have expired,  
To answer, ay or no, his urgent suit.

BEHECHIO.

And if you answer, No ?

ALANA.

He threats with fire

And swift-avenging sword to desolate  
The province.

BEHECHIO.

Doubt not he 'll perform his threat.

ANACAONA.

Why shouldst thou think so ? He has proved our friend.  
But thou, Behechio, art as suspicious  
As I am rash ; we should exchange our natures ;  
The first should be the woman's fault ; the last  
Is far too oft the man's. — My gentle one,  
Thy sorrows are my own ! Thy every tear  
Wrings my fond heart ! Would that I had the power  
To banish thy distress, and give thee joy !

BEHECHIO.

Poor fated dove ! Thou must yield to the blast  
Of power which howls around, and sweeps away  
Our rights, our wealth, our homes, our hearts' best  
treasures,  
As they were autumn leaves ! Yes, thou must yield,  
And wed Roldan, or wed with misery !

ALANA.

What greater misery than to be his wife ?

BEHECHIO.

Would it be less to see his threats fulfilled ?

## ALANA.

Yet there 's one hope ! Guevara will return !

## BEHECHIO.

Call'st thou that hope, to see thy lover fall  
A victim to the Alcalde's rage ? 'T were best  
For him and you he never should return.  
Subdue these tears ; my words are meant in kindness.  
Thou ne'er shouldst need to weep had I the power  
To master these intruders. List my counsel ;—  
'T is given in love and truth ; — forget Guevara —

## ALANA.

Forget him ! Never ! Yet, my dearest friend,  
Think me not wilful. Though Guevara's love  
Is my sole happiness, could I but find  
Some charm which from my memory could erase  
His cherished image, gladly would I seize  
Its aid. But no ! The blasts of time, of care,  
Of withering sorrow, may pass o'er my heart,  
Yet leave in its first power my youthful love !

## BEHECHIO.

Ah, thou art young, and know not how the touch  
Of time, of care, and sorrow can remove  
Emotions which to youth seem everlasting !  
This time alone can teach. But thou hast seen  
What turmoil here Guevara's short sojourn  
Produced ; — reflect what misery must ensue  
From his return. Seek not to lure him back.  
Roldan has wealth and power : his haughty heart

Thy charms have conquered, and thy voice can rule.  
Is it not triumph to behold this man,  
Before whom others tremble, kneel to thee,  
And own thy word a law ? Resume that power.  
One smile, one word of kindness, would subdue  
His tiger mood.

## ALANA.

Sooner I 'd die than wed him !

## ANACAONA.

'T is cruelty to urge it ! No, my child ;  
Fear not thou wilt be sacrificed ; some aid  
Will yet arrive. So beautiful, so young,  
Who could be steeled against thy misery ?

## BEHECHIO.

It is her youth and beauty which are doomed  
To cause that misery. But words are vain.  
The storm which must o'erwhelm us darkly lowers  
Above our heads. Too truly did my heart  
Forewarn me that Guevara would become  
The hastener of our doom, and its still voice  
Is fatally attested ! If his steps  
Again disturb our vales, the blood of those  
Who through his fatal passion fall must rest  
Upon his guilty head ; and may my curse  
Cleave to his soul ——

## ALANA.

Hold ! Curse him not ! My love  
Should shield Guevara from your wrath !

BEHECHIO.

Fond maid,

Thy woman's heart, which deems that all must yield  
To its weak passion, cannot waste a thought  
Upon the woes of others. Go ! enjoy  
Thy dream of love ! Recall the Spanish youth,  
And let his kiss banish the short-lived tears  
My words call forth, while bleeding round thee lie  
The hapless victims of thy selfish passion,  
Whose dying eyes shall curse thee when their lips  
Have lost the power of utterance !

[*Exit BEHECHIO.*

ANACAONA.

Woe is me !

Where'er I turn, dissension dogs my steps !  
Wealth, power, and rank, and joy were lost to me  
When false tongues lured my husband to his doom,  
And now my only hope of happiness,  
My loved Alana, droops. Ah, woe is me !

[*Exit, leading ALANA.*

## SCENE II.

*The forest near ANACAONA'S cottage. Enter GUEVARA.*

GUEVARA.

AND now methinks I 'm at the height of madness !  
The man, who loses 'neath a foaming torrent  
A gem of price, and straightway seeks the wave,

And vainly plunges to regain his treasure,  
Is not more wild than I. I am resolved  
Upon a desperate enterprise ; my life  
Each moment is at stake, and I must hold  
Both head and hand alert in its defence.  
Not the loud thunder in its sternest peal,  
Not the fierce lightning rushing to destroy,  
Are more intent upon the work of death,  
Or more relentless, than Roldan, if once  
His will or interest spur him on. I come  
To win or die. Not knightlike may I stand  
And face my foe, but, like the treacherous thief,  
Am fain to gain by stratagem my treasure.  
Ah, yonder stands the bower where dwells my love !  
Perchance in sleep Guevara is forgot ;  
Perchance she wakes and weeps. I 'll summon her ;  
A storm approaches, and no other roof  
Must give me shelter.

(ALANA appears from the cottage.)

But she comes, uncalled.

I 'll play the eavesdropper, and, standing near,  
Learn if she think of me. [Conceals himself.]

ALANA (coming forward).

I cannot sleep,

For cruel dreams make slumber horrible.  
Wild clouds whirl o'er the moon, to whose decline  
I look for joy. Guevara, dost thou too  
Gaze with impatience on the slow career

Of yon pale orb ? Dost thou too count the hours  
Which must elapse before another moon  
Shall rise in the blue heavens, and guide thee back  
To sad Alana ?

GUEVARA (*discovering himself*).

Let this fond embrace  
Solve all thy doubts, and banish all thy sadness.

ALANA.

Guevara ! Here ! O, this is happiness !

GUEVARA.

Short-lived, I fear ; but it *is* happiness.  
There 's care upon thy brow.

ALANA.

Nay, heed it not.

Say, how in safety have you reached me, how  
Evaded the Alcalde's vigilance ?

GUEVARA.

Thy heart should tell thee how imperious Love  
Fetters Time's wings. O, wearily the hours  
Have passed since last we met, and my fond heart —  
And proud as fond — no longer could submit  
To banishment ! And for my safety, know  
That Love inspires his votaries with wiles  
No other power could teach.

ALANA.

How dost thou hope  
To escape the Alcalde's eye ?

GUEVARA.

Thou, dearest maid,

Shalt aid to save thyself and me.

ALANA.

Say, how ?

What can I do ? Speak.

GUEVARA.

First, thy mother's love  
Must screen me from my foe ; and, next, thy care  
Must seek my trusty kinsman, De Moxica.

ALANA.

I 'll fly, Guevara, to perform thy will,  
For fear some unseen chance should wreck my hopes,  
Ere they are fairly launched upon this sea  
Of doubt and danger. Enter thou the cot.

[*Exeunt severally.*

### SCENE III.

*Another part of the forest. A violent storm; thunder and lightning.*

*Enter a number of Spaniards.*

FIRST SPANIARD.

THE saints protect us ! O, that I were safe  
In Andalusia's vales ! Not all the gold  
That e'er on Hayti's island has been found  
Should tempt me back to face these hurricanes.

SECOND SPANIARD.

Ah, Madre de Dios ! another flash !

I 'm almost blinded ! Holy Mother, hear !  
Save me this night, and to thy shrine I vow  
Six waxen torches ! Virgin, save thy child !

## FIRST SPANIARD.

And I on Saint Iago's shrine will place  
An ounce of gold ! Sancte Iago, ora,  
Ora pro nobis !

## THIRD SPANIARD.

Think'st thou this wild storm  
Can make the Alcalde tremble ?

## FIRST SPANIARD.

He has cause,  
As well as we who 've so long done his bidding.  
If I can 'scape the dangers of this night,  
I'll serve some leader of more tender conscience.

## SECOND SPANIARD.

I ask no better leader than Roldan ;  
But since he has submitted to Columbus,  
And gained his office and his lands, I think  
He plays the judge upon his ancient comrades,  
Who fought for him when he was landless. Ah,  
Another flash ! — another stunning peal !  
Sure there 's some judgment in this hurricane !  
Hark ye, my friends, you know the young Guevara ?

## FIRST SPANIARD.

Ay, we do so ; of noble blood is he  
As any in Castile, and ever bore him  
Knightlike to high and low. But what of him ?

## SECOND SPANIARD.

You know that jealousy moved the Alcalde  
To banish him, and some have dared to whisper  
That there was danger of foul play. Think you  
He 's been despatched, and Heaven has sent this turmoil  
To awe the guilty ?

## FIRST SPANIARD.

Nay, comrade, Heaven forbid !

## THIRD SPANIARD.

Perchance his wrathful spirit rides the blast !  
Ave Maria ! guard thy votary !

## SECOND SPANIARD.

Come, come, my friends ; we shall be needed elsewhere.  
Let 's haste for shelter to the Alcalde's quarters.  
The hurricane, I trust, has spared that, though  
It has o'erthrown our frailer dwellings. Come !

[*Exeunt Spaniards.*]

(Enter BEHECHIO, followed by Indians.)

## BEHECHIO.

Rage on, ye winds, and ye, terrific fires,  
Seek our oppressors' hearts ! Sure Heaven in wrath  
Hath moved earth, air, and water to avenge  
The white man's crimes. Not in the memory  
Of Hayti's oldest sons hath such wild war  
Ere raged upon our island. Hated race !  
All things combine to desolate our peace  
While they remain. O, list, ye raging blasts !  
Bear off upon your wings of might each trace

Of Spanish power, and I will bless your rage,  
And glory in my devastated vales,  
For hope and freedom will be ours again !      [*Exeunt.*]

(Enter GUEVARA.)

GUEVARA.

With joy I marked each tint of daylight fade ;  
With joy I marked the twilight usher in  
The friendly night. But such a night ! Methinks  
The fiends of hell shriek in the rushing blast,  
And ride upon the lightning. Ah, a crash !  
A shriek ! Alana's voice ! (*ALANA rushes across.*) Stay  
thee, my love ;  
What terror wings thy steps ?

ALANA.

Is 't thou, Guevara ?  
I knew thee not, for haste and deadly fear  
Bewildered me.

GUEVARA.

Forgive my ignorance  
And blind impatience, which exposed thee thus  
To storms and dangers.

ALANA.

See ! I am unharmed.  
But as I hurried homeward, a tall tree,  
Rent by the storm, shivered, and groaned, and fell  
Just as I bounded past it. I have done  
Thy errand safely. All is well prepared,  
Thy kinsman bids me say. Near to my home,

And unsuspected by our foes, exists  
A wondrous cave : there will I hide thee ; there  
At night conduct thy kinsman and his friends.

[*Thunder and lightning.*

GUEVARA.

The heavens seem rent asunder !

ALANA.

Save, O, save me !

GUEVARA.

My gentle one, could love's protecting arms  
Ward off the storms of life, here wert thou safe.  
But calm these fears, my love ; a forest maid  
Should bear a stouter heart. That frightful shock  
Has passed. Look up, and let us lie away.  
Thou hast been fleet enough when I pursued,  
My forest bird ! fly from the storm as fleetly.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *In ROLDAN's dwelling.* ROLDAN and DE ESCOBAR  
*discovered.*

DE ESCOBAR.

HATH your suit prospered since your rival went?

ROLDAN.

In time she may endure me. I confess  
I much mistook this maid. She 's far more bold  
Than her soft air bespeaks her. I supposed  
A few harsh words would bend her to my will,  
As bends the willow to the rushing blast,  
But she withstands my threats with threats as dire.

DE ESCOBAR.

You will have other work anon.

ROLDAN.

How so?

DE ESCOBAR.

Your dealing with Guevara has aroused  
The wrath of many of your sometime friends,  
Whose birth, like his, is noble. They complain  
Of insult to Castilian blood, from one —

## ROLDAN.

Ne'er mouth it, man ! I know what thou wouldest say,  
And value not these whims of birth. The first  
Who raised this barrier of nobility,  
To lord it o'er his brethren, must have been  
Of race as low as they, and or by wealth  
Or valiant deeds achieved this boasted rank.  
'T is ever to the founder of their race  
That nobles turn to boast their ancestry,  
And therefore those whom Fortune aids to rise  
Are, by their own confession, of more worth  
Than those who take her favors by descent.  
Think'st thou I care how my proud followers  
May chafe against my will ? Ay, let them fret !  
'T is but the streamlet dashing 'gainst the rock.

## DE ESCOBAR.

'T is more. Your pardon, but I 've proved your friend.  
I tell you, sullen brows and swelling hearts  
Must not be urged too far, or rashly trusted.  
These knights are men of action, prompt to ire,  
Fierce to resent an insult to themselves  
Or to their privilege, and this they deem  
Outraged by De Guevara's banishment.

## ROLDAN.

Dost thou expect me to recall Guevara,  
And show these cavaliers my penitence  
For following my own will instead of ~~this~~ ?

DE ESCOBAR.

You must both watch and soothe these murmurers.

ROLDAN.

And stoop to sue their pardon for this sin ?

DE ESCOBAR.

You could stoop low enough when interest

Required that you should win their aid ; and now

A little courtesy may well be spared

To those who 've served you bravely.

(*A soldier rushes in.*)

ROLDAN.

How is this ?

SOLDIER.

Angels protect us ! 'T was his ghost !

ROLDAN.

Whose ghost?

Speak, quick, or I 'll despatch thy quaking soul

Forth from its earthly covering, that thou

Mayst ne'er fear ghost again ! What wouldest thou say ?

SOLDIER.

Señor, the blast o'erthrew my hut ; I fled,

But, by the horrors of the storm confused,

I knew not whither. Suddenly a flash

Showed me beneath the trees a stately form

With ghastly face ; — 't was Don Hernando's spectre !

ROLDAN.

Thou gaping idiot, dost thou neglect

A soldier's duty, — let a stranger pass thee

Without a challenge, — then with senseless clamor  
And tales of ghosts think to blind scrutiny ?  
Hence with thy fears ! Yet stay, where saw'st thou this ?

SOLDIER.

Between this and the princess' dwelling.

ROLDAN.

So !

It moved that way ?

SOLDIER.

My lord, I saw it sink  
Into the earth.

ROLDAN.

Thou 'rt certain of the spot ?

SOLDIER.

I knew not where I was, until the lightning  
Disclosed the cottage through the trees.

ROLDAN.

Keep safe

This wondrous vision. Breathe it not again,  
Or, by my life, thy tongue shall pay the forfeit !  
I would not have my trustier followers  
Infected by thy fears. Go. Wait without. [*Exit soldier.*  
Guevara has returned ! Yon trembling fool  
Has seen him. Why he prates thus of a spectre  
I wonder much. Would it were so indeed !  
This needs attention. — Sank into the earth ?—  
I 've heard some whisper of a cavern, filled  
With treasures of the tribe, nor heeded it.

But this new treasure must be looked to. We  
Must learn what hopes he has. Don Adrian  
Will know his covert. Cautiously, my friend,  
Find if my soldiers have been tampered with.  
At night you fool shall guide us to the place  
Of his encounter. We must find this cave.  
Lose not an hour. You test these malecontents.  
I 'll to Anacaona's cottage, there  
To seek this ghost that haunts my timid bride.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE II.

*Before ANACAONA's dwelling. Enter ALAKA from the cottage.*

ALAKA.

THE storm has long since passed, yet still I tremble  
As when its fury raged. Guevara says  
A forest girl should never know such fears ;  
But Spaniard and Xaragua last night  
Trembled alike, nor blushed to own their terrors.

(Enter BOLDAX.)

BOLDAX.

Fair maid, methinks you would supplant the sun,  
So bright your eyes are beaming, while his rays  
Still sleep behind a night of clouds.

ALAKA.

The storm

Struck horror to my heart. I could not rest,  
Even when its fury ceased.

BOLDAN.

Would thou couldst know  
The hurricane of love which in my breast  
You doom to rage with unabated fury !

ALANA.

Must I remind you of your promise ?

BOLDAN.

No.

I have not yet transgressed it. When I said  
I would not urge your answer, I reserved  
A lover's privilege to plead my cause  
And sue for favor. Have you ever thought  
On our last meeting ?

ALANA.

Can you doubt it ?

BOLDAN.

Ay ;

'T was possible that some more welcome theme  
Engrossed all place within your breast.

ALANA.

Ah, me !

Can he suspect ? There 's meaning in his eye.  
I must appear unmoved. (*Aside.*) Did but my will  
Hold even course with duty, I had thought  
More deeply on that meeting ; as it is,  
What could efface it from my memory ?

ROLDAN.

She shrinks beneath my glance. (*Aside.*) And I may  
hope ?

ALANA.

Why shouldst thou seek my love, when maids as fair  
Each moment meet thy view, who, proud as fair,  
Would glory in thy choice.

ROLDAN.

Ab, stubborn girl !

You know your power, — know that my faithful heart  
Is yours alone ; so scruple not to jest  
Of those who cannot rival your young charms.

ALANA.

What shall I say ? The time is opportune  
To affect submission, and thus turn aside  
Suspicion, if he harbour it. Alas,  
'T will be a bitter task ! (*Aside.*) Methinks, Roldan,  
That flattery must be dear to Spanish dames,  
Since you, who call yourself a plain, blunt warrior,  
Invoke its aid so oft. A Haytien girl,  
Used to sincerity, may be forgiven  
For doubting.

ROLDAN.

Why, I 've wooed thee with soft words  
And with harsh threats. What will subdue thy heart ?  
Speak, and I pledge my soul to win the spell !

ALANA.

In truth, I could be grateful if your love

Were more like reason, nor so wildly varied ;  
First seeking through my vanity to win,  
And next to crush me by ungoverned fury.

ROLDAN.

And if I rule my conduct by your will ——

ALANA.

Nay, now your question overleaps your promise.  
The moon has not yet waned.

ROLDAN.

Grant me one kiss,  
A pledge of hope and sweet forgiveness ! (*She shrinks, and turns away.*) Traitress !  
Think'st thou I cannot pierce the shallow wiles  
By which thou seek'st to blind me ? Tremble, girl !  
I know Guevara has returned ; I know  
Thy mother shelters him. He has abused  
My former mercy, and his doom is sealed  
By his and thy own folly. (*ALANA kneels to him.*) Off,  
I say,  
Nor hope I will relent !

ALANA.

Mercy, Roldan !  
O, spare him ! Spare Guevara ! Wreak thy rage  
Upon my head !

ROLDAN.

On thee ? No, thou shalt live  
To glut my vengeance, — live to curse thy life !

**ALANA.**

It is already cursed, and I am cursed !  
O, plant thy dagger in my heart, and take  
My blessing !

**ROLDAN.**

Thou shalt live to bless my sight  
With agonies that martyrs never knew.  
Thy lover's corse shall blacken in thy view,  
And thou shalt gaze upon him till thine eyes  
Stiffen with horror.

**ALANA.**

O, be merciful !  
Let but Guevara live, and any doom  
Thou canst name for myself I will endure.

**ROLDAN.**

When you can pledge yourself to be my wife —

**ALANA.**

O, no, no, no ! So great a sacrifice, —  
Can I submit ? — O, whither shall I fly ?  
Kinsmen and friends, where are ye ? O Guevara !

**ROLDAN.**

Alana, calm this frenzy. If to save  
Guevara be your choice, swear to obey  
My wishes. You are powerless. Think well.  
Another hour shall see this dagger's point  
Drenched in Guevara's blood. You tremble : swear !  
Do you still hesitate ? Now, by the saints,  
If I 'm not quick obeyed, thy rebel blood

Shall flow before Guevara's ! I 'll not brook  
Longer to be a prey to woman's caprice.  
One stroke shall set me free. [She faints.  
So, my unruly tongue 's o'erleaped the mark,  
And, 'stead of forcing her into compliance,  
Has driven her senses from her. Sure my fate  
Decrees this stubborn girl to be my curse !

[Bears ALANA into the cottage.]

### SCENE III.

*The cavern. GUEVARA discovered, as just awakened from slumber.*

GUEVARA.

HERE, like a beast of prey within his lair,  
I couch, and sleep, and wait the friendly darkness,  
Which brings me freedom and the breath of heaven.  
I know not whether noon gleams in the sky,  
Or night, with drooping lid, hangs o'er the earth ;  
For, through my severed dreams, my unchained thoughts  
In minutes have performed the deeds of hours.  
At last a sound invades my tomb ; a rustling  
As of a young bird's wing among the boughs.

(Enter ALANA.)

'T is night, 't is night ; for, lo ! my evening star  
Gleams through the shades, and makes this sepulchre  
Her throne. O my beloved, I may look  
Into thine eyes' pure light — But how is this ?

No smile upon thy lip ? thy cheek's warm glow  
Quite faded ? Speak ! I 'm tortured by such fears —

ALANA.

We are betrayed !

GUEVARA.

Betrayed ? How ? When ? By whom ?

ALANA.

I know but this ; some dire, some fatal chance  
Hath to Roldan disclosed thy bold return.  
What demon hath he bought to track thy steps ?

GUEVARA.

This is some dream, some frenzy of thy fear.

ALANA.

Too true, too fearful.

GUEVARA.

Why am I still safe ?

ALANA.

Thank Heaven that even his keen, ferocious eye  
Hath never reached this spot ! Here, on thy breast,  
This very hour, let me expire, ere meet  
Again his hated glance ! O my own love,  
Such numbing terrors steal o'er my weak heart,  
And chill my blood, I scarce can wish to live !

GUEVARA.

If my retreat is unsuspected, all  
May yet be hoped. Shake off this withering dread ;  
Think but of vengeance, liberty, and love.

ALANA.

O love and liberty ! — sweet hopes, sweet sounds,

That, 'mid the sunshine of my heart, breathed forth  
All harmonies of life, all melodies  
Of nature's voices, as in day's pure light  
The birds pour forth their joyous carollings,  
And thousand insects murmur their delights ;  
But as the sun sinks, sink those pleasant notes ;  
And as despair's dark night falls on my breast,  
That music of my soul for ever dies !

## GUEVARA.

My woodland flower, so tender and so fair,  
Why must these blasts sweep o'er thy lovely head ?  
Yet rouse thee, dear ; 't is treason to thy knight  
To shrink and tremble when his arm enfolds thee.  
Be firm awhile. How didst thou learn this danger ?

## ALANA.

From his own lips, who makes thy presence danger ;  
Who swore thy death, and pointed 'gainst my breast  
His gleaming steel, to force me to receive  
His loathsome love.

## GUEVARA.

For vengeance, Heaven ! Speak on !

## ALANA.

A welcome darkness, like the shades of death,  
Hid all things from my sight and sense. I woke  
Within my mother's arms. The fiend had fled.  
Approaching night obscured the earth and sky.  
With trembling step, yet cautious eye, I sped  
To warn thee, and to weep within thine arms.

GUEVARA.

My rage is a devouring flame, that preys  
Upon myself. When shall I give it vent  
Upon this ravening wolf ? Alana, speak  
Again my kinsman's message. Said he not  
All was prepared ?

ALANA.

All, all !

GUEVARA.

This night

The tyrant dies ! — Yet what is death ? 'T is not  
Revenge.

ALANA.

'T is all I ask, — 't is safety.

GUEVARA.

True.

But who guides De Moxica to this spot ?

ALANA.

My mother ; but a deeper darkness yet  
Must make the attempt secure. Why didst thou rush  
Upon such perils ?

GUEVARA.

For thy love, sweet maid,  
Which makes the peril pastime. Thou, for mine,  
Must rule thy fears and steel thy throbbing breast,  
For if we win, the victory is thine ;  
And if we fail, thou 'lt need to banish all  
The woman from thy heart, or die of woe.

## ALANA.

Ay, I behold thee now glorying in youth,  
In strength and beauty, yet a few short hours  
May banish the bright vision, — 't is too bright  
To bless my fond eyes long ! Yes, thou mayst fail.  
What then am I ? The Alcalde's hopeless slave, —  
His wife ! Forbid it, Heaven ! Yet what escape ?

## GUEVARA.

Save through the avenues of death there 's none.  
Alana, my own love, thou hast believed  
My vows of fond affection, and thy heart  
Repays them all, but thou canst never know,  
If I should fall, the frenzy of my passion, —  
Know all that proves its deathless truth : high hopes  
Of honor, rank, and fame, thy beaming glance  
Hath far outshone, and now I stake my life,  
And ask but one return, — thy promise, love,  
Never to wed my enemy.

## ALANA.

Think'st thou  
I am so little mindful of my faith ?  
Dost thou suspect my fears would so betray me ?  
Or, trusting in my love, canst thou believe  
I 'd live to wed another ?

## GUEVARA.

Could I rest  
Within my bloody grave if thou wert his ?  
No ! earth should gape and give me forth again ;

A hideous spectre would I stand before thee,  
And claim my bride. Then swear, my own Alana,  
To be my own in death, nor crown the triumph  
Of yon barbarian. (*Holds a cross before her.*) See ! this  
holy sign  
Of love and truth, I taught thee to adore.  
Let thy first vow on it be for my sake,  
Who gave thine eyes its light. Alana, kneel,  
And let thy words call the Great Power to witness  
Thy oath of faith.

ALANA.

Thy will is mine. I swear !

GUEVARA.

Be blessed, my gentle one, for thy sweet love,  
Unsoiled by aught of this world's selfishness.  
I hear a stealthy tread. My kinsman comes.  
One kiss ! Now hie thee from this scene of gloom ;  
Safe in thy cot await the rapturous hour  
When I shall clasp thee in the face of day,  
And tell of victory and happiness.

(Enter ROLDAN.)

ROLDAN.

That happiness be mine. How is 't, young sir,  
You come uncalled ?

GUEVARA.

It was my will, Roldan !

ROLDAN.

Your will ! You take it boldly. Yet, Señor,

I have a warrant to pull down your pride.  
And thou, young traitress, dearly shalt thou rue  
Thine artful dealing. Nay, unclasp thine arms,  
Soft captors of the knight ; nor think thy breast  
Will shield him from my wrath.

GUEVARA.

Loose me, Alana !

ROLDAN.

Nay, wait thy friends' approach ! they are at hand,  
And well equipped.

(REGUELME, DE MOIXICA, and others enter, guarded.)

GUEVARA.

Thy life is gone, foul despot !

[They fight, GUEVARA falls.

O life, and fame, and love ! — a fevered dream !  
Must I die unrevenged ? — Ay, there 's my grief !  
Alana, draw thou near, that I may look  
My last on thee, and on the world I leave.  
Both seem more lovely to my waning sight,  
Than even my undimmed vision deemed them.

[ALANA approaches GUEVARA.

ROLDAN.

Back !

Thou art my slave, — won, as yon traitor wished,  
At the sword's point. Now kneel and sue for mercy !

ALANA.

Alcalde, I defy thee ! In my breast  
The Carib spirit rises ! I am strong

In resolution to escape thy power !  
 Despair discards my fears ! Guevara, see !  
 I shrink not from my oath ! Now, if thou lov'st me,  
 Death shall not sever us ! — Thy dagger ! — quick !

GUEVARA.

To part from thee were death ; to die with thee  
 Is life. No more my spirit would delay,  
 But longs with thine to wing her upward flight,  
 Freed from the woes of earth. Dost thou not tremble ?

ALANA.

No ! There is but one tie. Haste, haste, my love !  
 Strike, ere that monster dares again approach !

GUEVARA.

Still let me gaze on thee ! My hand is weak  
 To mar thy loveliness ! (Stabbing her.) Thus art thou  
 saved !

(Hurls the dagger towards ROLDAN, who groans and staggers back.)

Behold a noble's vengeance !

ALANA.

See, Roldan,  
 The slave escapes thee ! Even thy iron hand  
 Cannot withdraw death's prey from his stern grasp.

[ANACAONA rushes in with a shriek.

That voice recalls me ! — Mother, I depart  
 Where Spaniards have no power ! Guevara, love,  
 Let thy last glance rest on me ! — Thou art gone !  
 I haste to follow thee !

[Dies.

(Enter BEHECHIO.)

## BEHECHIO.

Thou widowed wife,  
And childless mother, weep not ! Stay thy tears ;  
And for each drop let countless curses fall  
On the destroyers !

ANACAONA (*to the Spaniards*).

Ay, ye have ta'en all,—  
All, — all Anacaona's treasures ! Now  
Her life alone remains. Spaniards, take that,  
For ye have made it desolate !

THE END.

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